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# FOOTBALL

## 1978 Annual Preview

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FOOTBALL

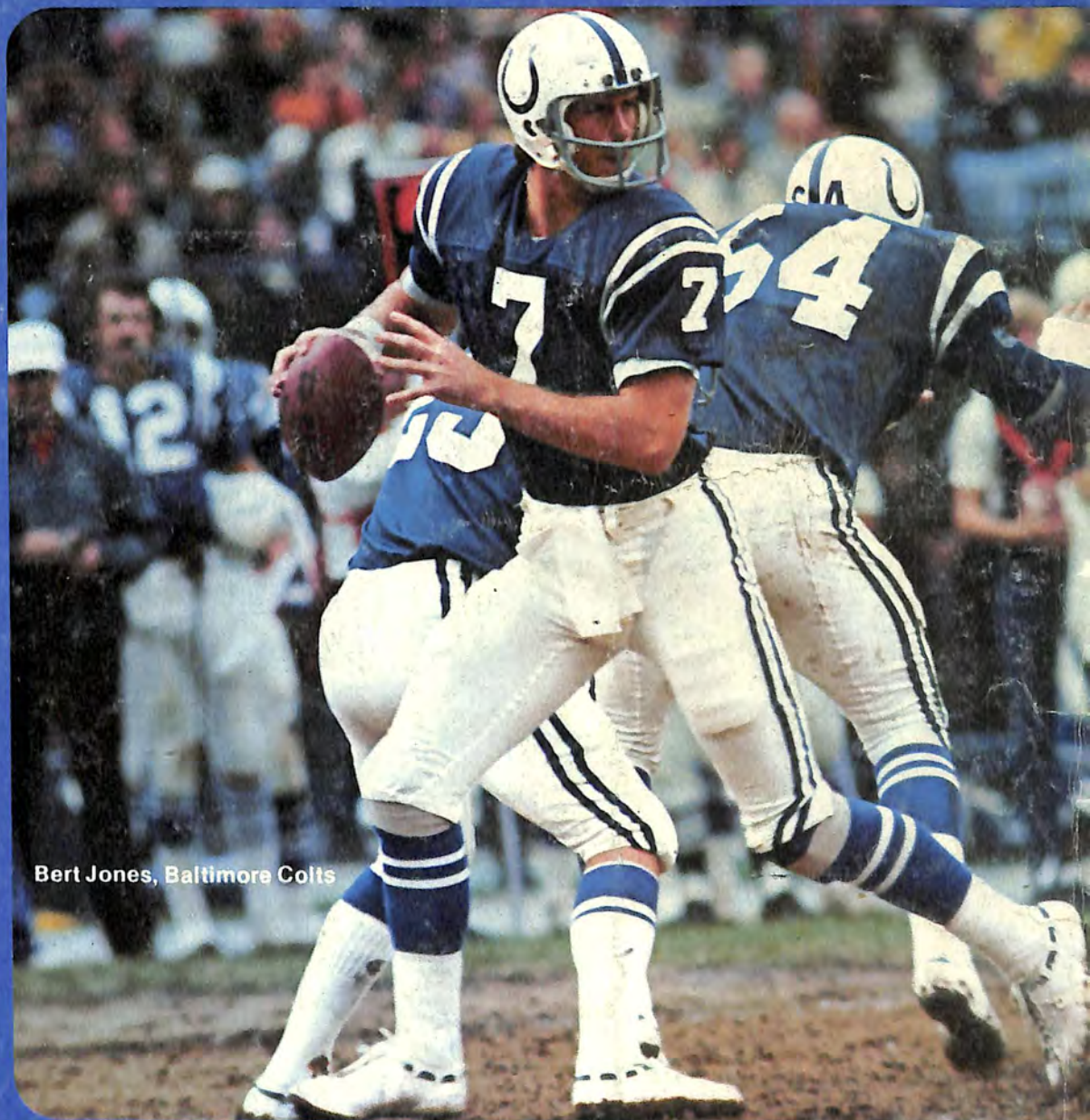
### Indepth Team Analysis

### Division Winners

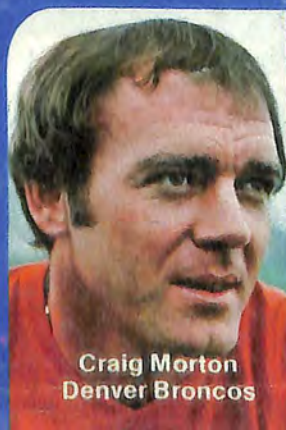
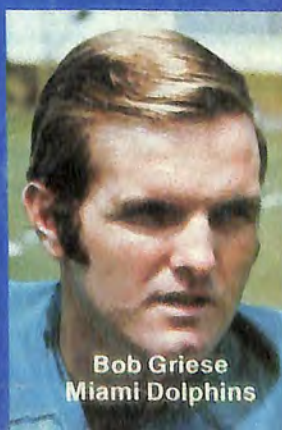
### GAME SCORE PREDICTIONS

### Super Bowl Prediction

TEAM	PR	OR	DR
Oakland Raiders	125	76	49
Dallas Cowboys	125	75	50
N.E. Patriots	123	74	49
Exclusive Stat-Key Annual	123	74	49
Cinn. Bengals	122	75	47
Baltimore Colts	122	75	47
Pitts. Steelers	121	74	47



Bert Jones, Baltimore Colts


Craig Morton  
Denver Broncos

Bob Griese  
Miami Dolphins

Billy Johnson  
Houston Oilers

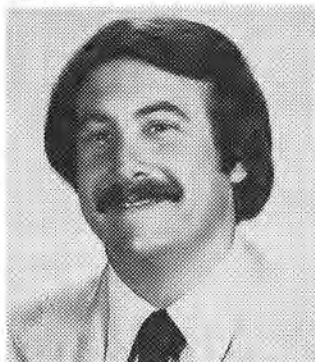
Mark van Eeghen  
Oakland Raiders


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# GamePlan™ PRO FOOTBALL

Volume Eight GamePlan Pro FOOTBALL Annual Preview

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Joseph Del Popolo (pictured above), Publisher of GamePlan Magazines, promises you, our loyal readers, the same excellent coverage in the future that resulted in GamePlan twice being named the most accurate football magazine in the nation. For those of you desiring to be heard relative to any aspect of this publication, please feel free to write Mr. Del Popolo at the address listed below. We welcome any praise and/or criticism you may express with regard to GamePlan.

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# Schedule of ABC-TV Games

**Monday, Sept. 4**  
Baltimore at Dallas

**Monday, Sept. 11**  
Denver at Minnesota

**Monday, Sept. 18**  
Baltimore at New England

**Monday, Sept. 25**  
Minnesota at Chicago

**Monday, Oct. 2**  
Dallas at Washington

**Monday, Oct. 9**  
Cincinnati at Miami

**Monday, Oct. 16**  
Chicago at Denver

**Monday, Oct. 23**  
Houston at Pittsburgh

**Thursday, Oct. 26**  
Minnesota at Dallas

**Monday, Oct. 30**  
Los Angeles at Atlanta

**Monday, Nov. 6**  
Washington at Baltimore

**Sunday, Nov. 12**  
Pittsburgh at Los Angeles

**Monday, Nov. 13**  
Oakland at Cincinnati

**Monday, Nov. 20**  
Miami at Houston

**Monday, Nov. 27**  
Pittsburgh at San Francisco

**Sunday, Dec. 3**  
Denver at Oakland

**Monday, Dec. 4**  
Chicago at San Diego

**Monday, Dec. 11**  
Cincinnati at Los Angeles

**Monday, Dec. 18**  
New England at Miami



# Schedule of CBS-TV Games

**Sunday, September 3**  
Green Bay at Detroit  
Los Angeles at Philadelphia  
Minnesota at New Orleans  
St. Louis at Chicago  
San Francisco at Cleveland  
Washington at New England

**Sunday, October 1**  
Detroit vs. Green Bay at Milwaukee  
Los Angeles at New Orleans  
Minnesota at Tampa Bay  
New York Giants at Atlanta  
St. Louis at Miami  
Philadelphia at Baltimore

**Sunday, October 29**  
Detroit at Chicago  
St. Louis at Philadelphia  
San Francisco at Washington  
Tampa Bay at Green Bay  
New York Giants at New Orleans

**Sunday, September 10**  
Atlanta at Los Angeles  
Chicago at San Francisco  
Dallas at New York Giants  
New Orleans vs. Green Bay  
Philadelphia at Washington

**Sunday, October 8**  
Atlanta at Pittsburgh  
Minnesota at Seattle  
New York Giants at Dallas  
Philadelphia at New England  
San Francisco at Los Angeles  
Tampa Bay at Kansas City  
Washington at Detroit  
Chicago at Green Bay

**Sunday, November 5**  
Dallas at Miami  
Detroit at Minnesota  
Green Bay at Philadelphia  
New Orleans at Pittsburgh  
New York Giants at St. Louis  
San Francisco at Atlanta  
Tampa Bay at Los Angeles

**Sunday, September 17**  
Chicago at Detroit  
Dallas at Los Angeles  
Philadelphia at New Orleans  
San Francisco at Houston  
Tampa Bay at Minnesota  
Washington at St. Louis

**Sunday, October 15**  
Dallas at St. Louis  
Detroit at Atlanta  
Los Angeles at Minnesota  
New Orleans at San Francisco  
Tampa Bay at New York Giants  
Washington at Philadelphia

**Sunday, November 12**  
Atlanta at New Orleans  
Chicago at Minnesota  
Dallas vs. Green Bay at Milwaukee  
NY Giants at Washington  
St. Louis at San Francisco  
Tampa Bay at Detroit

**Sunday, September 24**  
Atlanta at Tampa Bay  
Detroit at Seattle  
Green Bay at San Diego  
Los Angeles at Houston  
St. Louis at Dallas  
San Francisco at New York Giants  
New Orleans at Cincinnati

**Sunday, October 22**  
Atlanta at San Francisco  
Chicago at Tampa Bay  
Green Bay at Minnesota  
New Orleans at Los Angeles  
Philadelphia at Dallas  
St. Louis at New York Jets  
Washington at New York Giants

**Sunday, November 19**  
Atlanta at Chicago  
Detroit at Oakland  
Green Bay at Denver  
Los Angeles at San Francisco  
New Orleans at Dallas  
Philadelphia at New York Giants  
St. Louis at Washington



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Continued

**Sunday, November 26**

Los Angeles at Cleveland  
Minnesota at Green Bay  
New York Giants at Buffalo  
New Orleans at Atlanta  
Philadelphia at St. Louis  
Tampa Bay at Chicago

**Sunday, December 3**

Atlanta at Cincinnati  
Detroit at St. Louis  
Green Bay at Tampa Bay

Los Angeles at New York Giants  
Philadelphia at Minnesota  
San Francisco at New Orleans

**Saturday, December 9**

Minnesota at Detroit

**Sunday, December 10**

Dallas at Philadelphia  
Green Bay at Chicago  
St. Louis at New York Giants  
Tampa Bay at San Francisco  
Washington at Atlanta

**Saturday, December 16**

Chicago at Washington

**Sunday, December 17**

Atlanta at St. Louis  
Dallas at New York Jets  
Green Bay at Los Angeles  
Minnesota at Oakland  
New Orleans at Tampa Bay  
New York Giants at Philadelphia  
San Francisco at Detroit

**Sunday, December 24**

NFC First-Round Playoff Game

**Saturday, December 30**

NFC Divisional Playoff

**Sunday, December 31**

NFC Divisional Playoff



# Schedule of NBC-TV Games

**Sunday, January 7**

NFC Championship

**Sunday, September 10**

Cincinnati at Cleveland  
Houston at Kansas City  
Miami at Baltimore  
New England at St. Louis  
New York Jets at Buffalo  
Oakland at San Diego  
Seattle at Pittsburgh

**Sunday, September 17**

Buffalo at Miami  
Cleveland at Atlanta  
Kansas City at New York Giants  
Oakland at Green Bay  
Pittsburgh at Cincinnati  
San Diego at Denver  
Seattle at New York Jets

**Sunday, September 24**

Baltimore at Buffalo  
Cleveland at Pittsburgh  
Denver at Kansas City  
Miami at Philadelphia  
New York Jets at Washington

**Sunday, October 1**

Cincinnati at San Francisco  
Houston at Cleveland  
Kansas City at Buffalo  
Oakland at Chicago  
Pittsburgh at New York Jets  
San Diego at New England  
Seattle at Denver

**Sunday, October 8**

Baltimore at St. Louis  
Buffalo at New York Jets  
Cleveland at New Orleans  
Denver at San Diego  
Houston at Oakland

**Sunday, October 15**

Buffalo at Houston  
Kansas City at Oakland  
Miami at San Diego  
New England at Cincinnati  
New York Jets at Baltimore  
Pittsburgh at Cleveland  
Seattle vs. Green Bay at Milw.

**Sunday, October 22**

Cincinnati at Buffalo  
Cleveland at Kansas City  
Denver at Baltimore  
Miami at New England  
Oakland at Seattle  
San Diego at Detroit

**Sunday, October 29**

Baltimore at Miami  
Buffalo at Cleveland  
Denver at Seattle  
Houston at Cincinnati  
Kansas City at Pittsburgh  
New York Jets at New England  
San Diego at Oakland

**Sunday, November 5**

Cincinnati at San Diego  
Cleveland at Houston  
New England at Buffalo  
New York Jets at Denver  
Oakland at Kansas City  
Seattle at Chicago

**Sunday, November 12**

Baltimore at Seattle  
Denver at Cleveland  
Houston at New England  
Kansas City at San Diego  
Miami at Buffalo  
New York Jets at Philadelphia

**Sunday, November 19**

Buffalo at Tampa Bay

Cincinnati at Pittsburgh

Cleveland at Baltimore  
New England at New York Jets  
San Diego at Minnesota  
Seattle at Kansas City

**Thursday, November 23**

(Thanksgiving Day)  
Denver at Detroit

**Sunday, November 26**

Cincinnati at Houston  
New England at Baltimore  
New York Jets at Miami  
San Diego at Kansas City  
Seattle at Oakland

**Sunday, December 3**

Baltimore at New York Jets  
Buffalo at Kansas City  
Cleveland at Seattle  
Miami at Washington  
New England at Dallas  
Pittsburgh at Houston

**Saturday, December 9**

Baltimore at Pittsburgh

**Sunday, December 10**

Buffalo at New England  
Houston at New Orleans  
Kansas City at Denver  
New York Jets at Cleveland  
Oakland at Miami  
Seattle at San Diego

**Saturday, December 16**

Pittsburgh at Denver

**Sunday, December 17**

Buffalo at Baltimore  
Cleveland at Cincinnati  
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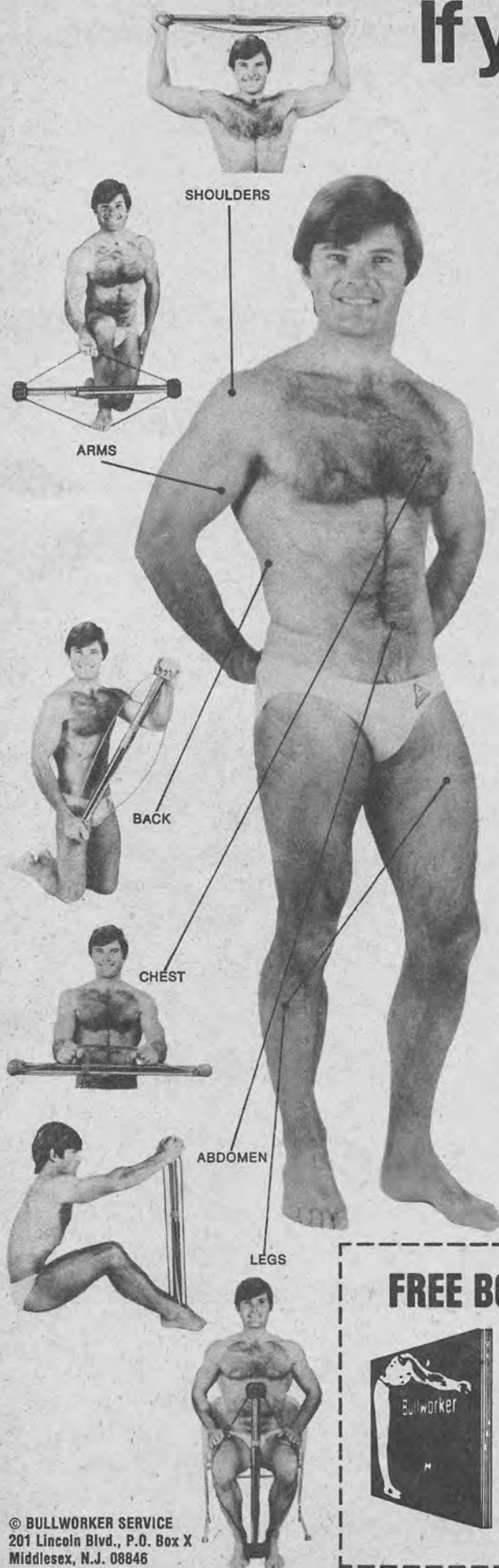
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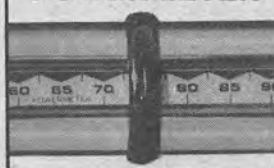
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# 1979 Super Bowl Preview

Well, it seemed to take forever getting here, but at long last it's the Big One—Super Bowl XIII in Miami's Orange Bowl. Pro football's version of the World Series, Stanley Cup, Kentucky Derby and some of the old Mardi Gras spirit all rolled up into one.

What a splendid day for football—especially Super Bowl XIII, held for an unprecedented fifth time in the Orange Bowl—with sunshine predicted for the afternoon and the temperature in the mid-60's and rising.

Rumor had it that Ralph Nader's sports' consumer group would be there, a loosely knit organization called (and how's this for originality) F.A.N.S. No one outside of maybe Nader and a few others even knew what the phrase really stood for. But the protest was quickly dispersed when it was discovered the only ones interested in "Nader's Raiders" were a young man whose only experience in sports had been as a third-string high school soccer goalkeeper, and a gray-haired lady who got very upset when she stood in line for an hour only to find out she had to go elsewhere to bet \$5 that the Dallas Cowboys would defeat the Oakland Raiders.

Which brings us to good old Art, who also had a "modest" wager of \$10 on the final outcome of the game, but that was far from his mind as he negotiated his car through the traffic surrounding Miami's Super Bowl. Along with his working buddy, John, the two had the foresight to purchase their tickets for the Big Game several months before the crunch of "Super Bowl Week" hit town. You see, Art had remembered that the *Miami Herald* reported scalpers were getting \$200 and \$300 a ticket for the National Football League championship tilt the previous year.

Super Bowl XIII had the potential to be a real dandy, maybe even a "barn-burner" since both Art and John agreed this just might develop into the best of the Super Bowls ever held. The last few games had been flops, of course, because how could you compare the combatants in the previous two Super Bowls (Denver-Dallas, Pittsburgh-Minnesota) to the Cowboys and Raiders.

Position-by-position, probably the two most talented teams in the NFL, and with their past track records, you knew both Dallas and Oakland had that all-important championship experience. An important intangible which last year's AFC entry, Denver, lacked and therefore wound up taking a 27-10 beating from Dallas that was even worse than the final tally indicated.

Down on the Orange Bowl's artificial surface the game had started, and the Raiders and Cowboys were going at it with a vengeance. Digging deep to find

that something "special" great athletes have. The preseason, a 16-game regular season slate and the playoffs leading up to the NFL title game was a long road to hoe, but these two teams—these "professionals"—were going about their work with one thing in mind—to win. Both had tasted the nectar of a Super Bowl championship before (Dallas '77 and '71 and Oakland '76), so both knew winning the "Biggie" is the ultimate high in an NFL player's life.

The game produced fireworks quicker than most anticipated, and despite the kind of defensive hitting that would halt a Mack Truck, the score at the half was Dallas 17, Oakland 10. One very costly error—a fumble on the Oakland 9-yard-line by Robert Newhouse—on first-and-goal really hurt, and the way the Raiders' DE Charles Philyaw wrapped his 280 pounds around that erratic pigskin, it's a wonder he didn't squash the football flatter than a White Tower hamburger.

The Cowboys drew first blood mid-way through the opening quarter with three points on Efrin Herrera's 33-yard field goal, but fell behind when Oakland quarterback Ken (who else?) Stabler hit tight end Dave (who else?) Casper on a 14-yard scoring pass. In the second stanza, Dallas forged back ahead when a pretty 84-yard drive culminated with a nifty against-the-grain touchdown scamper of 15 yards by Tony Dorsett.

The Raiders knotted the score at 10 each when placekicker Errol Mann settled for a 19-yard "chip shot" because an Oakland drive stalled against the Cowboys' "Domsday II" defense. But last blood before intermission went to Dallas on a lightning-fast scoring drive highlighted by two "key" plays—a 53-

yard pass from Staubach to Drew Pearson and a four-yard touchdown blast by Newhouse that made amends for his earlier fumble.

Half-time ceremonies at Super Bowl XIII—said to be the most grandiose and expensive ever—were everything that was expected and more besides. Produced to a great degree by the brilliant animators and creators who run Florida's Disney World, there was just about anything you could ask for.

Beautiful floats, lovely baton twirlers and precision marching bands, giant Disney characters like Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck. Plus, the 80,000-plus fans who had filled the Orange Bowl had all been supplied with flash lights, and when the stadium was darkened and all the flash lights were turned on, it looked like something out of *Close Encounters* of the fourth kind. The glimmering of the thousands of flash lights was made even more eerie by the silver oblong of the Goodyear Blimp hovering over the sea of flickering illumination above the Orange Bowl.

Up in that special section where dignitaries like NFL Commissioner Pete Rozelle, other NFL team owners and sundry hanger's-on assemble, talk centered on the first half of action in the game.

"You hate to admit it, me especially," Rozelle said, "but the last two Super Bowls were real duds. This one is starting out to be a real hum-dinger."

"That's for sure," someone added, "it seems like the score should be more than 17-10 the way the teams have moved the ball."

"And, I might add, they're moving that ball against some pretty gosh-darn good defensive teams too!"

It didn't take very long into the second half for the offensively-potent Raiders to make their move, taking the opening kickoff—a 24-yard return by Carl Garrett—on their own thirty-eight. Eleven plays later in a drive that was simply flawless in execution, sparked by "Snake" Stabler's passes short and long and the running of Mark van Eeghen and Clarence Davis, Oakland got on the board again. This time, on a one-year dive by van Eeghen that had the Cowboy defenders screaming he'd been stopped short of the goal line.

No matter, the extra point made it 17-17. And as they like to say in the radio and TV booths: "Well, folks, we've got us a brand new game here." But it stayed that way until the five-minute mark of the third quarter, when the Raiders—aided by a "shanked" punt by the Cowboys' Danny White—took over on the Dallas 44-yard line.

A mixture of running and passing plays only advanced the ball to the Cowboys' 24, so on fourth down and a "long" seven, Oakland's Mann came in and con-



Oakland's Ken Stabler

verted a 34-yard field goal. For the first time in Super Bowl XIII, the Raiders had taken the lead, 20-17, and along the sideline Oakland's effervescent head coach John Madden tore off his headphones and hollered at his players heading onto the field for the ensuing kickoff.

"We got 'em on the run. Kick it deep, bottle him up, make the SOB cough up a fumble if you can!"

Nothing much occurred on that kickoff, or for that matter until the early moments of the fourth period. Then "big break" number two occurred, a pass by Oakland's Stabler intercepted by the Cowboys' Cliff Harris, who always seemed to be around when the key play was needed. Harris proceeded to run the pig back to the Raiders' 16-yard line.

It was almost academic from there, first an eight-yard scamper by Dorsett, then a four-yard burst by Newhouse. Then the clincher, a "dinky" little four-yard pass from Staubach to tight end Billy Joe DuPree, standing all alone in the corner of the end zone like the Oakland defense forgot he was even on the field. Extra point by Herrera on-the-money, Dallas back in front 24-20, and now it was Dallas' skipper Tom Landry doing the chortling (only in his own low-key way): "C'mon, now, get the ball back quick, we're not out of the woods by a long shot!"

In their stadium seats, Art and John were having a grand old time, since it turned out that the man in the seat adjacent to them had on a full-length top coat. Which seemed odd because of the fairly balmy weather, until he opened the coat and displayed a complete array of alcohol tucked neatly into the inside pockets of his oversized coat. At a quick glance, the assortment included pint bottles of Bourbon and Scotch, plus fifths of Gin and Brandy.

"It's a TD or nothing for the Raiders," John commented, "down 24-20, a field goal won't do any good unless they get two of 'em, and that's pretty tough in this short time."

The Raiders and Cowboys exchanged punts once more in the final stanza, and it looked like now-or-never for Oakland as they took possession of the football on their own 41-yard line. Time remaining: 3:46 and a long 59 yards to the goal line through a Dallas defensive line that was beginning to look like a bunch of Godzilla in football gear.

Racing the clock but not panicking, Stabler drove his team right down the throat of that high-and-mighty "Doomsday II" defense. Five consecutive plays—three Stabler aeriels complemented by two van Eeghen bursts—shoved the ball to the Dallas 32-yard line. Possibly field goal range for Errol Mann, but three-points would not be enough, so it was a touchdown or bust.

Time left now, one minute and fifty-seven seconds, and on first and 10 from the Cowboys' 32, Stabler reached into his magic bag. Managing to avoid the pass rush of Martin and "Too Tall" Jones, he rifled a 17-yard bullet to old reliable Dave Casper, who hauled it in at the 15-yard stripe even though Dallas defenders were doing everything but stealing his shoes. Two running plays by Oakland netted seven more to the 8-yard line, but the

ancient clock perched atop the Orange Bowl—an eyesore in these lavish surroundings—kept on ticking away. Now it read: 1:07, and worst of all, the culmination of the entire season was at hand if the Raiders couldn't strike soon.

But like the expert quarterback he is—demonstrating why he was playing on the field instead of sitting up in the stands—Oakland's Stabler did neither of those "obvious" things. Instead, after taking the snap from Dave Dalby, he faked to van Eeghen to "freeze" the enemy defense for a minute and rolled out left.

Knee injuries had slowed the "Snake" since his All-American days at Alabama, but nothing was going to deny him this time. Not even a rip-snorting, arm-flailing pass rush by what seemed like half the Cowboy defense, which he somehow avoided until he found what he was looking for.

There, in the right hand corner of the end zone, where running back Clarence Davis had slipped unnoticed. Well, not exactly "unnoticed", because just as Stabler uncorked his southpaw throwing arm, D.D. Lewis and Benny Barnes started heading that way at maximum speed. And with a crash, a grunt—and a loud obscenity about somebody's parentage—all three players (Davis, Lewis and Barnes) and the ball arrived at almost the same time.

For a long moment, there was hardly a sound from the throng in the Orange Bowl, which had been screaming like maniacs just seconds before. So deathly quiet you could almost hear the evening breakers as they rumbled to shore at nearby Biscayne Bay. It was downright unnerving, and John finally broke the silence:

"It should be a TD, but with these NFL officials, it could be called pass interference either way. When the ball's in the air like that, it's anybody's pigskin!"

But then the calm was suddenly shattered by a deafening roar, made to seem even louder by the previous quiet, as first one and then another official held their hands aloft signifying a touchdown for the Raiders. Untangling himself from the pile in the endzone, Oakland's Davis "spiked" the football, and the Cowboys' disgusted Barnes responded by picking up the bouncing pigskin and firing it deep into the stands.

The game official who wore a portable transmitter to pass along the calls to the fans, marched to where the Raiders were getting ready for their extra point attempt, flipped on his walkie-talkie gizmo and announced:

"The official ruling is pass interference against both numbers 31 (Barnes) and 50 (Lewis), and the touchdown counts for Oakland."

The anti-climactic PAT conversion by Mann lifted it to 28-24 in favor of Oakland, and the Orange Bowl clock read 35 seconds left in Super Bowl XIII. Sure, miracles can happen, but not on this particular day as Oakland's ensuing kickoff was returned to the 27-yard line by Butch Johnson. The Cowboys had just one time-out left, which didn't help their cause, so on first down Staubach tossed a little down-and-out to Drew Pearson that he carried out at the 38-yard stripe to stop the clock.

But, alas, that last time-out and two "hurry-up" pass plays by Staubach just weren't enough for the Cowboys to win their coveted second consecutive Super Bowl title. When it was all over, members of both teams shook hands and offered congratulations, and even the frolicsome Madden went so far as to give his Dallas counterpart, a stern-visaged Tom Landry, an enormous bear hug at mid-field.

In the special press booths atop the Orange Bowl, NFL Commissioner Rozelle was watching the instant replay of the game's last disputed call on a TV monitor. It was obvious, to anybody this side of a blind person, that the Dallas defenders had done everything but tear off the head of Oakland's Davis as he hauled in the winning TD pass.

"No question on that one," he said to no one in particular, "it was pass interference all the way. The wonder is how Davis even hung onto the ball getting belted that way."

Slipping into his light-weight jacket, Rozelle bid adieu to others still lingering in the booth and opened the door into the adjoining hallway. From the opposite end of the narrow corridor, a middle-aged man clutching a Hi-ball glass in his hand was coming toward Rozelle.

"Wait, you're Rozelle, aren't you? Boy, you know, those near-sighted zebra shirts you call officials did it again! Pass interference, how can that be when the ball's not in the air?"

"But at the time of the contact," Rozelle explained patiently, "Davis hadn't yet caught the ball—it's all in there on the instant replay if you want to see for yourself."

"Naw, you people always doctor those replays so they show whatever you want them to. Man, I wish I had a job like that."

"What do you do for a living?" "I'm a funeral director in business with my brother. And wait, listen to this joke I thought up about the mortuary business as compared to your occupation, pro football. You ready? At least in undertaking, there's no instant replay to bug you, and nobody ever gives the official (me, of course) any hard times!"

"That's funny," Rozelle dead-panned, "but I've got to catch a plane in a few hours. It was nice talking with you."

"You, too, Pete, and if you ever need any work—not that you would of course—you should check me out because mine is a fast-growing business."

Turning to exit via the door at the end of the hall, Rozelle was already thinking about the upcoming Pro Bowl game, the college draft, the legal squabbles ahead and the sundry other things a pro sports commissioner lives with day and night. Just maybe, he thought for one fleeting second, moving into a new profession might not be so bad if the right situation opened up.

After all, the on-going problems of baseball's Bowie Kuhn may be just the tip-of-the-iceberg, and the days of the omnipotent pro sports commissioners could eventually end, with all of them becoming "figureheads" like the Queen of Great Britain. Oh, well, if it does come to that, Rozelle could always try out with New Orleans or Tampa Bay.



# The Stat-Key<sup>TM</sup> Annual

The Stat-Key Annual is designed to measure the potential of football teams in terms of rated "power." It was developed and tested in previous seasons by the GamePlan Analysts. The Stat-Key Annual appears in GamePlan Magazines to enhance the fan's enjoyment of the game of professional football by emphasizing the factors which affect the outcome of competition. The Stat-Key Table on page 16 rates the scoring potential of all 28 teams in the National Football League.

The Stat-Key Annual enables the fan to estimate point differences between the scores of opposing teams. The Offensive and Defensive ratings enable the fan to estimate the score of each of two opposing teams—an Instant PrePlay of a game. The Stat-Key Annual allows the fan to readily compare and analyze the power of competing teams prior to game play. It offers the fan a key to the analysis of professional football.

## Developing the Stat-Key System

In the Stat-Key Table, each of the 28 teams has a Power Rating, an Offensive Rating and a Defensive Rating. These ratings are developed between football seasons by the GamePlan Analysts. In developing the Stat-Key Annual, the analysts thoroughly evaluate the factors that they feel most strongly influence (and reflect) a professional football team's scoring ability:

1. Each team's scoring record and final power ratings from the previous season.

2. Retirements, trades and age factors.
3. A careful evaluation of the rookie crop.
4. Strength of schedule.
5. Each team's detailed statistics from previous season play.
6. Changes in coaching staff (and coaching methods).

The above factors are evaluated and quantified. Factors such as "scoring record," "losses and gains in key players," and "Strength of opponents" are weighed more heavily than others. A relatively complicated process of analysis follows and eventually refined ratings (printed in the Stat-Key Table) are developed. These ratings, then, represent each team's potential in terms of rated power at the start of the 1978 season.

No system can predict the outcome of football competition precisely. There are simply too many variables, many developing during actual game play. The excitement and spontaneity of football are indeed the main reasons for its great popularity as a spectator sport. Thus, the Stat-Key Annual is designed to: 1) provide the fan with basic estimates of team strength, which reflect a team's scoring ability under totally neutral conditions; 2) make the fan aware of those factors (other than team strength) which influence the outcome of games; 3) encourage the fan to draw on his own knowledge of the game, and to employ his own judgment, in weighing influencing factors; and 4) enable the fan to derive greater overall pleasure and satisfaction during the season.

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# Using The Stat-Key System

In the Stat-Key Table, Each team has three ratings:

Power Rating (PR)  
Offensive Rating (OR)  
Defensive Rating (DR)

These ratings, allow the user to:

I. Estimate the PROBABLE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SCORES of opposing teams.

**The Power Rating of the lower rated team is deducted from the Power Rating of the higher rated team. The result is the number of points by which the higher rated team is expect to win.**

Example: Cincinnati Power Rating ..... 122  
Kansas City Power Rating ..... 112  
Cincinnati to win by 10 points

II. Get an Instant Preplay of a game (estimate the PROBABLE SCORE of each of two opposing teams.)

**The Offensive Rating of a given team, minus the Defensive Rating of its opponent is the estimated score for the given team.**

Example: Cincinnati Offensive Rating ..... 75  
Kansas City Defensive Rating ..... 43  
Cincinnati to score 32 points.

Kansas City Offensive Rating ..... 69  
Cincinnati Defensive Rating ..... 47  
Kansas City to score 22 points.

The Instant PrePlay (estimated game score) is then,  
Cincinnati 32, Kansas City 22



# Stat-Key Rating Table

## for National Football League

**Includes Conference, Division Ranking for Start of 1978 Season**

PR = Power Rating    OR = Offensive Rating    DR = Defensive Rating

<b>NATIONAL CONFERENCE</b> CONF. AVG.    PR= 117.3	PR	OR	DR
<b>Eastern Division</b> DIV. AVG.    = 118.0			
Dallas Cowboys	125	75	50
Philadelphia Eagles	118	71	47
Washington Redskins	118	71	47
St. Louis Cardinals	117	73	44
New York Giants	116	69	47
<b>Central Division</b> DIV. AVG.    PR= 116.2			
Minnesota Vikings	120	73	47
Chicago Bears	118	72	46
Detroit Lions	118	71	47
Green Bay Packers	115	69	46
Tampa Bay Buccaneers	110	65	45
<b>Western Division</b> DIV. AVG.    PR= 117.0			
Los Angeles Rams	123	74	49
Atlanta Falcons	118	69	49
San Francisco 49ers	117	71	46
New Orleans Saints	110	67	43

<b>AMERICAN CONFERENCE</b> CONF. AVG.    PR= 119.0	PR	OR	DR
<b>Eastern Division</b> DIV. AVG.    PR= 118.6			
New England Patriots	123	74	49
Miami Dolphins	122	74	48
Baltimore Colts	122	76	46
New York Jets	114	69	45
Buffalo Bills	112	68	44
<b>Central Division</b> DIV. AVG.    PR= 120.3			
Cincinnati Bengals	122	75	47
Pittsburgh Steelers	121	74	47
Houston Oilers	120	73	47
Cleveland Browns	118	72	46
<b>Western Division</b> DIV. AVG.    PR= 118.2			
Oakland Raiders	125	76	49
Denver Broncos	121	72	49
San Diego Chargers	118	72	46
Seattle Seahawks	115	71	44
Kansas City Chiefs	112	69	43

# Adjusting Stat-Key<sup>TM</sup> Estimates

The final outcome of a football game is influenced by many factors other than team strength. Meaning each game will be played with a number of elements affecting it. The pro game is affected by many of the same things that influence college games, such as home team advantage, strength of opponents on the schedule, weather and injuries. But there is one factor that is unique to pro ball: the professional player.

The professional football player, unlike his college counterpart, is playing the game for a living. He knows that inconsistency—failure to do his job and do it well—jeopardizes his pay check.

This player is a professional, trained in his trade. Because he is a professional among professionals, there is less of an ability gap among pro players than among college players. For example, if Cornell were to play Texas 100 times this fall, on Cornell's home field or on a neutral field, the Cornellians would undoubtedly lose all 100 encounter. In contrast, on any given day the Atlanta Falcons could travel to Miami and defeat the Dolphins.

Other factors that may affect pro games include.

## Home Team Advantage

A home team has an advantage over an opponent by being more familiar with the field, surroundings and local climate. Ardent supporters in the stands and not having to travel add to the advantage.

## Strength of Opponents Played

A team accustomed to playing strong teams often will have an advantage over a team with weaker competition. This factor may reflect the edge the American Football Conference is reputed to have over the National Conference.

## Weather

Bad weather (rain, sleet, snow, wind) may equalize the performances of teams with unequal scoring ability. Generally, bad weather reduces the scoring of both teams, though poor conditions may have less effect on teams with well-balanced offenses than teams depending mainly on either passing or rushing.

## Personnel Changes

Losing players by injuries or suspension can definitely hamper a team's effectiveness. A player's performance may also be affected by good or adverse publicity and personal problems.

## Rivalry

Long-standing "grudge" games such as those between Green Bay-Chicago, Los Angeles-San Francisco

and Kansas City-Oakland often produce upsets because of deep emotions developed over many years.

The more important the factors, the more they will affect the accuracy of the Stat-Key estimated score. Basic estimates should be adjusted to a certain extent because of the outside factors which may even be strong enough to cause an upset. The point advantage for a given factor generally is from 1 to 10, depending on the amount of the influence. An example of the adjustments is given below.

Weekly updating is an all important aspect of the Stat-Key Annual because the scoring potential of professional football teams will usually undergo changes as the season progresses. Since each team's present ratings are based on their 1976 performance, as modified by evaluations of pre-season personnel changes, the accuracy of the present ratings can be justified only after actual game competition. It will be necessary to update the ratings after each week of play.

The GamePlan Analysts perform weekly analyses of, all games between the 28 rated teams. Many factors, including pre-game variables, are taken into account in determining updating requirements. To expect the reader to perform such complex weekly analysis would be out of line with our intention to keep the Stat-Key easy to use. To overcome this problem we have devised a simple formula employing the chart (opposite page) to accomplish "ball park" updating. While this method is not exactly the same as that employed by the GamePlan Analysts, the very nature of the simplified process (Difference Splitting) brings the updated ratings closer to actual team strength after each week of play.

## Stat-Key System in Use

Cincinnati	122	Power Rating
Kansas City	112	Power Rating
Cincinnati favored by	10	points
Cincinnati home advantage	+6	
Cincinnati to win by	16	points

Cincinnati	75	OR
Kansas City	43	DR
Cincinnati to score	32	points
Kansas City	69	OR
Cincinnati	47	DR
Kansas City to score	22	points

Score expected to vary by +6 points in Cincinnati's favor.



# Updating the Stat-Key System

## THE UPDATING PROCEDURE

The Updating procedure is based on the variance (error) between estimated and actual differences in scores (or how far off the estimates were from actual scores). Note that adjustment factors (explained on previous page) need not be taken into account in updating the basic ratings.

Updating is achieved with this easy to use chart → The chart shows the number of points to be added to or deducted from team ratings for a given variance between the estimated and actual difference in scores.

Example:

### From Stat-Key Power Ratings

Cincinnati to win over  
Kansas City by 10 points.

### Hypothetical Result of Game

If Cincinnati won by 17 points.

Then Cincinnati won by 7 points more than estimated (variance). The chart shows that the amount of correction to ratings for a 7 point variance is

Power Rating ..... 1 point  
Offensive Rating ..... 1 point  
Defensive Rating ..... 0 points

These amounts are added to the ratings of the team that the variance was in favor of (Cincinnati), and subtracted from the ratings of the other team (Kansas City).

Thus, the ratings here would be updated as follows

<b>Cincinnati</b>	<b>PR</b>	<b>OR</b>	<b>DR</b>
original ratings	122	75	47
updated ratings	123	76	47

<b>Kansas City</b>	<b>PR</b>	<b>OR</b>	<b>DR</b>
original ratings	112	69	43
updated ratings	111	68	43

VARIANCE:	POINT CHANGE		
	In Power Rating	In Offensive Rating	In Defensive Rating
0 to 4	0	0	0
5 to 9	1	1	0
10 to 14	2	1	1
15 to 19	3	2	1
20 +	4	2	2

Note: There is less need for adjustment as the season progresses. It is recommended that the amount of adjustment be limited to a maximum of 3 points after the fifth game, and 2 points after the eighth game of the season for each team.

To make the Stat-Key easier to use, we recommend the reader make up simple forms, similar in design to the Stat-Key Table. If updating is accomplished properly, the reader will enjoy the use of the Stat-Key system for the entire season.

(For those readers who do not have the inclination or time to keep the Stat-Key updated and to adjust its estimates on a weekly and game by game basis, and for those who desire greater accuracy in updating and adjustment. GamePlan offers a weekly service throughout the season.) Just fill in the coupon and mail it with your check payable to GAMEPLAN MAGAZINES, INC.

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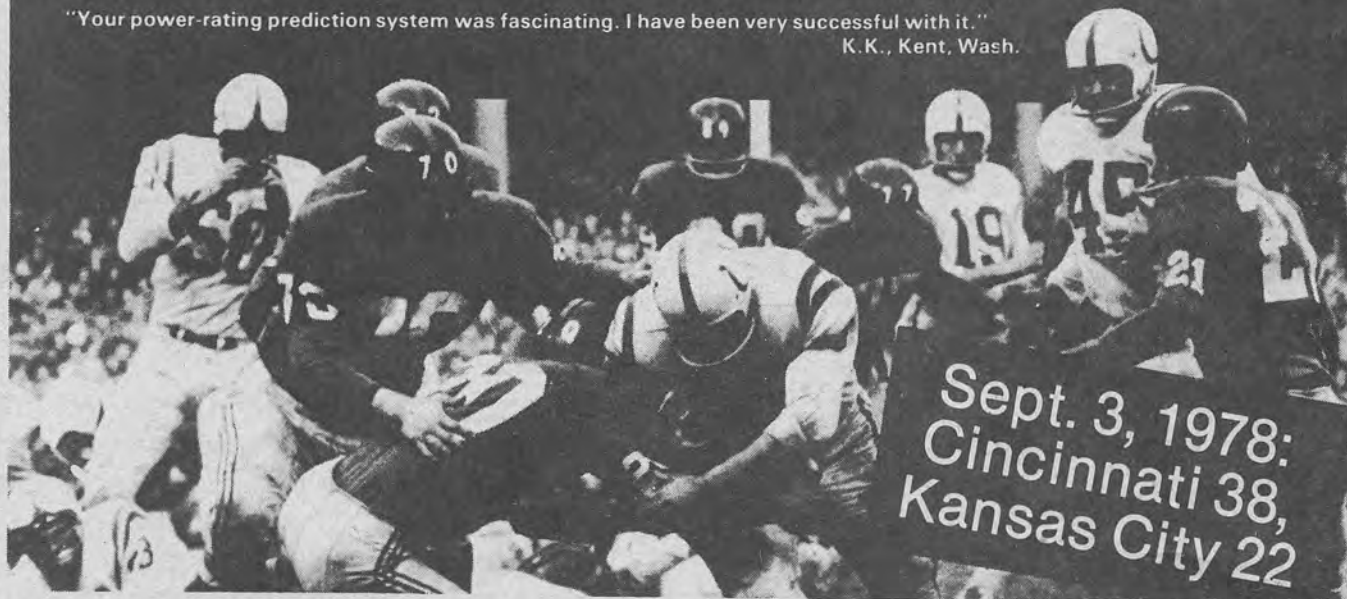
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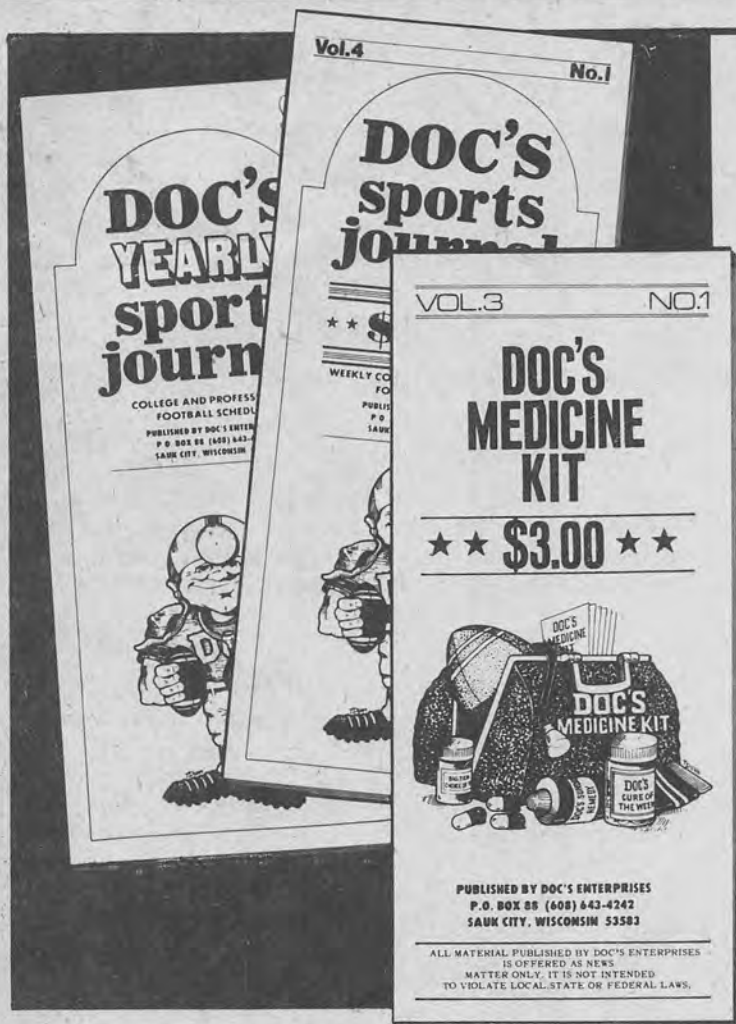
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# AMERICAN FOOTBALL CONFERENCE PREVIEW

Talk about getting caught with your crystal ball down!

That's exactly what happened to the so-called experts last season, when the amazing Denver Broncos played their own version of "Rocky Mountain High" by winning the AFC title. Right down the line, all the prognosticators (alas, GAMEPLAN included) missed the boat on the '77 Broncos. But, heck, who could have foreseen that a new head coach (Red Miller) and a hitherto mediocre quarterback (Craig Morton) would make that big a difference.

However, it was the Broncos who got caught with something down—their pants—in Super Bowl XII, when they were roped and hog-tied (27-10) by the NFC's Dallas Cowboys. That Super Bowl victory by Dallas, coupled with a 14-13 Pro Bowl win, gave the NFC something to crow about for awhile in the escalating war for supremacy between the conferences.

But, in truth, the AFC is still much the stronger of the two, especially in terms of "championship" caliber teams. Which means, of course, that it's also harder to pick the correct order-of-finish in the American Conference—something the Denver Broncos proved beyond a shadow of a doubt last season.

Why right in the AFC East alone, there're three teams capable of walking off with all the marbles—Baltimore, Miami and New England. The Colts, divisional kingpins the past three years, would seem the logical choice as the most promising of those clubs if you went with the first instinct. Coach Ted Marchibroda's gridders have championship experience, which is always an important factor in playoff action.

However, we seldom go with "first instinct" and after careful evaluation, we like the New England Patriots to rule the division this year. Forget that the Pats' All-Pro lineman, John (Ham Hocks) Hannah has demanded he be traded, and will probably get his wish before long. There's a lot more to Coach Chuck Fairbanks' team than Hannah or any other single player, enough talent in fact for the New Englanders to finish first in the AFC East and play a prominent role in the championship playoffs.

Running neck-and-neck for second place will be Baltimore and Miami, but we lean toward the Dolphins because of their rejuvenated defense, the masterwork of Coach Don Shula and his defensive aides. The Colts will run a close third in the division, and since there are two wild card playoff berths up for the taking

in the AFC this year, Miami and Baltimore could both win enough games to qualify for those at-large spots.

Fourth place in the AFC East will be occupied by the NY Jets, starting to rebuild under Coach Lou Michaels but still far from strong enough to play more than a "spoiler" role in the race for the division title. To the rear, in fact, way to the rear in last place will reside the Buffalo Bills, with a new head coach (ex-LA Ram skipper Chuck Knox) and all the same old problems.

Just as hard to forecast is the AFC's Central Division, where Pittsburgh and Cincinnati have run 1-2 for almost as many years as most people can remember. The internal problems and injuries that plagued Coach Chuck Noll's Steelers in '77 are a thing of the past, which should make them formidable again. But we think Coach Bill (Tiger) Johnson's Bengals are finally going to stop "eating the apple" and cart off title honors in the AFC Central this season.

The Steelers are destined for second place, and they will win enough games to bid for a wild card playoff berth, while running third will be the Houston Oilers. However, if Coach Bum Phillips' youthful Oilers continue to improve, they could be a real surprise. Last in the AFC Central, you'll find Cleveland, although new head coach Sam Rutigliano will make the Browns a lot more competitive and wipe out the memory of last year's collapse.

Out West, the big question is whether the Denver Broncos have another miracle up their sleeves, because that's what they'll need to hang onto the top spot. Well, miracles, like lightning, never strike twice in the same place, which interprets to read the Oakland Raiders will

rise—like cream—to the top in the AFC West again, led by their jolly cheerleader of a coach, John Madden.

Coach Red Miller's Broncos will slip to second, but if the "Orange Crush" defense holds up and quarterback Craig Morton can nurse another superb year out of his aching body, Denver is sure to be a wild card contender. The San Diego Chargers will occupy the third rung in the division, in what might be their last go-around under Coach Tommy Prothro, said to be ready to retire when this season is over.

The up-and-coming Seattle Seahawks, in just their third year of existence—all under Coach Jack Patera—should nose into fourth place in the AFC West. Which leaves only the cellar, where the Kansas City Chiefs will reside for awhile until new head coach Marv Levy can straighten out the mess left for him by his predecessors.

When playoff time rolls around in the AFC, New England, Cincinnati and Oakland, by virtue of winning the regular season crowns in their respective divisions, will most definitely figure in the proceedings. And since there are two wild card berths available for the first time this year, look for a wide-open battle for those spots involving Baltimore, Miami, Pittsburgh and Denver. Also in the running if they get a few breaks along the way will be Houston and San Diego.

However, in the end, it's going to be a year you can color "silver-and-black" because—after a one-year hiatus—the Oakland Raiders will rule the roost again in the AFC. Turning back the challenge of any and all playoff rivals on their way to a date with destiny (and the Dallas Cowboys) in Super Bowl XIII.



The Baltimore Colts' "Sack Pack" prepares for action.



# AFC EAST



Bert Jones, Baltimore Colts

# New England Patriots

(9-5-0)

Everyone has heard the saying that goes: "The best laid plans of mice and men often go astray." And that could well have been what was running through the mind of Coach Chuck Fairbanks last season, as he watched his highly touted Patriots finish with a disappointing 9-5 record that included losses to virtual "have-nots" like the NY Jets (30-27) and the Buffalo Bills (24-14).

Now, some people might find it difficult to understand why Coach Fairbanks would be so dissatisfied with his team's performance in '77. Why, hell, there's a number of NFL teams—like the previously cited Jets and Bills—that would give their eye-teeth for that kind of a record.

But what you have to remember is one very important detail, and this is the part that rankles Fairbanks the most. When you talk about the Patriots, you're talking about one of the "Rolls Royce" teams in the NFL, a club with perhaps the most dazzling array of player talent this side of the Dallas Cowboys.

Yet, for one reason or another, the Pats have never quite fulfilled their potential. Oh, we'll grant that two years ago New England did land the AFC wild card berth in the playoffs, where they lost (24-21) to the eventual Super Bowl champion Oakland Raiders in a highly disputed first round game.

However, that was the one and only time in the last 14 years the Patriots have managed to claim a playoff berth, and like they say, the true mark of a championship team is their ability to play with consistency. The kind of consistency the Pats will have to maintain in the coming NFL season if they want to wipe out the memory of their frustrating '77 campaign and re-emerge as a bonafide title contender in the AFC.

**OFFENSE:** Piloting a balanced Patriot attack is gutsy quarterback Steve Grogan, who passed for 2,162 yards and 17 touchdowns last season, completing 160 of 305 aerial attempts. Entering just his fifth year as a pro, Grogan's a rapidly improving young field general, and he's a runner par excellence whose scrambling tactics were largely responsible for his leading the American Conference in the fewest quarterback sacks (14) last year.

The No. 2 man at quarterback is Tom Owen, a six-year veteran, but he's seen very limited action with the Pats since he was acquired in a '76 trade with the San Francisco 49ers. In his two full years with New England, Owen has attempted only five passes in short relief roles. Therefore, we've got to suspect his lack of exposure would be a serious handicap should he be called upon to run the offense on a regular basis.

The Patriots finished only 10th best among AFC teams in passing last season, but statistics don't always tell the full story. Because with quarterback Grogan pitching to the likes of Darryl Stingley, Stanley Morgan and Russ Francis, the Pats have all the ingredients for an explosive passing attack should they ever

## 1978 Schedule

Sep 3	WASHINGTON
Sep 10	at St. Louis
Sep 18	BALTIMORE
Sep 24	at Oakland
Oct 1	SAN DIEGO
Oct 8	PHILADELPHIA
Oct 15	at Cincinnati
Oct 22	MIAMI
Oct 29	NEW YORK JETS
Nov 5	at Buffalo
Nov 12	HOUSTON
Nov 19	at New York Jets
Nov 21	at Baltimore
Dec 3	at Dallas
Dec 10	BUFFALO
Dec 18	at Miami

decide to forsake their run-oriented offense.

Wide receiver Stingley led that threesome last season with 39 catches for 657 yards and five TDs, which was the finest performance in his pro career. Stingley's a 4.5 speedster who can drive enemy defensive backs crazy when he takes off on deep passing routes, and his "big play" ability makes him the team's chief long-distance threat.

His counterpart at the other wide receiver, Stanley Morgan, was nothing short of sensational in '77 as a rookie, when he rocketed for 443 yards on 21 catches (21.1 yard average) and snagged three scoring aeriels. Morgan's also a gifted kick returner who averaged 13.8 yards (second best in the AFC) on punt returns last season, and just imagine how much better he'll be with additional experience!

Tight end Russ Francis had a bit of an off-year by his standards in '77, when injuries held him to just 16 receptions for 229 yards and four TDs. But he's back at top form now, which is certain to benefit the team's aerial attack. Supplying depth at tight end are Al Chandler and Don Hasselbeck, who combined for 16 catches a year ago. Hasselbeck is a young giant (6-7, 245) with tremendous potential, and he could be a starter at tight end for a lot of NFL teams.

Patriots	1977 Results	Opp
21	Kansas City	17
27	at Cleveland	30
27	at N.Y. Jets	30
31	Seattle	0
24	at San Diego	20
17	Baltimore	3
24	N.Y. Jets	13
14	Buffalo	24
5	at Miami	17
20	at Buffalo	7
14	Philadelphia	6
16	at Atlanta	10
14	Miami	10
24	at Baltimore	30

Powering the rushing attack is acrobatic Sam "Bam" Cunningham, who vaulted for 1,015 yards on 270 carries last season. The versatile "Bammer" also led the '77 Pats in pass receiving with 42 catches, and another year like that should earn him the All-Pro recognition he deserves.

Stationed at the other running back is Don Calhoun, a chunky (6-0, 215) blaster who notched 727 yards on 198 sorties a year ago. Calhoun is known as "super-sub" in New England because of his ability to come off the bench and pick up needed yardage, but he demonstrated in '77 that he's just as capable of holding down a starting job.

The Patriots are knee-deep in quality reserves at running back, where those on call include Ike Forte, Jess Phillips and Horace Ivory. Another ball totter counted on for help is former regular Andy Johnson, a hard-nosed runner who sat out last season with an injury. Johnson could easily re-claim a starting job now that he's healthy again.

In the offensive line, the Pats are . . . well, put it this way: if all the regulars remain happy and healthy, they're in tip-top condition. But if problems persist, such as All-Pro guard John Hannah's repeated demand that he be traded to another team, Coach Fairbanks may have to re-vamp the front wall a bit.

## New England Patriots Rookie Roster

(Listed in order of selection)

NAME	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
Cryder, Bob	G	6-5	265	Alabama
Cavanaugh, Matt	QB	6-2	209	Pittsburgh
Pennywell, Carlos	WR	6-3	190	Grambling
Wheeler, Dwight	T	6-4	218	Tennessee St.
Matthews, Bill	LB	6-0	220	S Dakota St
Coleman, Kem	LB	6-3	235	Mississippi
Hawkins, Mike	LB	6-1	223	Texas A & I
Falcon, Terry	G	6-3	255	Montana
Tatupu, Mosi	RB	6-0	225	Southern Cal.
Petersen, Tim	LB	6-2	215	Arizona State
Ferguson, Bryan	DB	5-11	185	Miami (Fla)
Williams, Charles	LB	6-1	227	Florida
Gibney, John	C	6-5	249	Colgate



Provided Hannah sticks around for another season in New England, he and reliable seven-year veteran Sam Adams will plug the guard holes, which will give the Pats great blocking power in the middle of the offensive line. However, should Hannah be traded, his old spot will go to either Fred Sturt or Pete Brock, the latter a promising three-year pro who can also play center.

The regular at the pivot spot is Bill Lenkatis, an underrated veteran who anchors the front wall. Blowing open holes from the tackle berths are Tommy Neville, who holds the team record for most games played (160), and Pro Bowler Leon Gray, who joined with guard Hannah early last season in a holdout that really hurt the performance up front. Supplying depth at tackle are ex-Cleveland Brown regular Bob McKay and three-year pro Shelby Jordan.

**DEFENSE:** Bravo! Encore! That's our assessment of New England's superb defensive unit, which ranked first in the AFC last season overall, and established a new team record by holding 14 opponents to a total of only 217 points.

The Pats employ a 3-4 defensive alignment, somewhat unique by NFL standards although gaining in popularity all the time. The anchor in the front wall is nose tackle Ray Hamilton, an active 250-pounder ideally suited for playing the "nose" spot. Backing him up is Richard Bishop, a promising veteran of three NFL seasons who spent the early part of his pro career playing in Canada.

Thundering in from the defensive line flanks are Julius Adams and Mel Lunsford, a pair of fearsome pass rushers. Adams is an eight-year veteran and the inspirational leader up front for the Pats, and he ranks among the best defensive ends in the game. There's excellent depth at the flanks in the persons of Tony McGee and Greg Boyd. McGee led the team in '77 with 13½ quarterback sacks, including five individual sacks in a 16-10 win over the Atlanta Falcons.

Any pro football team that uses a 3-4 defense has to boast an outstanding corps of linebackers, and the Patriots fit that role to a "T." Crunching enemy ball carriers from the inside backer positions are Sam Hunt and Steve Nelson, and there's very little that gets by this top-notch duo. They're supported by second-year pro Ray Costict, a lowly 11th round draft choice in '77 who made a good impression with his rugged play as a relief man.

Holding forth at the outside linebacking positions are Steve Zabel and Pete Barnes, battle-seasoned pros with an aggregate 21 years of NFL experience. Supplying depth on the outside are former regular Steve King and Rod Shoate, the latter a hustling third-year man with the ability to claim a full-time job.

Just as the Pats are solid in the front wall and at linebacker, so they also have a great corps of defensive backs, led by speedy cornerback Mike Haynes, who swiped a team-leading five enemy passes last season. Haynes is a gifted athlete who also averaged 8.3 yards on punt returns in '77, although his duties in that capacity may be reduced in the future. Returning kicks in the NFL is analagous to a kamikaze mission, and the Patriots may not want to risk the life-and-limbs of a superb

#### 1977 LEADERS

PASS	A/C	INT	YDS	TD
Grogan	305/160	21	2162	17
REC	No	YDS	AVG	TD
Cunningham	42	370	8.8	1
Stingley	39	657	16.8	5
INT	NO	YDS	AVG	TD
Haynes	5	54	10.8	0
McCray	4	61	15.2	0
RUSH	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
Cunningham	270	1015	3.8	4
Calhoun	198	727	3.7	4
PUNT	NO	YDS	AVG	BK
Patrick	65	2354	36.2	6
SCORE	TD	EP/MA	FG/MA	PTS
Smith	0	33/33	15/21	78
Stingley	6	O/O	O/O	36

defensive back like Haynes, who's been selected to play in the Pro Bowl following each of his two pro seasons.

Stationed at the opposite corner is 12-year veteran Bob Howard, who added

#### 1977 Regular Season Statistics

	PATRIOTS	OPP
FIRST DOWNS	247	215
NET RUSH	2303	1605
Avg Per Game	164.5	114.6
NET PASS	2007	2033
Att/Comp	305/160	356/188
Had Int	21	19
Avg Per Game	143.3	145.2
PUNTS/AVG	65/36.2	78/39.1
Punts Return/Yds	43/429	33/270
Avg Per Return	10.0	8.2
KICKOFF-RET/YDS	39/1051	52/1086
Avg Per Return	27.0	20.9
FUMBLES/LOST	28/15	20/11
FIELD GOALS	15/21	13/21
PATS	33/33	22/26
TOTAL POINTS	278	217

four pass interceptions a year ago, bringing his career pass theft total to 31. Challenging him for starting duties is Raymond Clayborn, who played steady defense in relief roles as a rookie in '77, but

#### New England Patriots 1978 Veteran Roster

NO	NAME	POS	HT	WT	AGE	YR	COLLEGE	GAMES IN '77
85	Adams, Julius	DE	6-4	260	30	8	Texas S'thern	14
61	Adams, Sam	G	6-3	255	30	7	Pairie View	14
59	Barnes, Pete	OLB	6-1	240	31	12	S'thern U	12
27	Beaudoin, Doug	S	6-1	195	23	3	Minnesota	11
64	Bishop, Richard	NT	6-1	260	23	3	Louisville	13
65	Boyd, Greg	DE	6-6	270	22	2	San Diego St	13
58	Brock, Pete	C/G	6-5	260	22	3	Colorado	14
21	Brown, Sidney	DB	6-0	186	21	1	Oklahoma	0
82	Burks, Steve	WR	6-5	210	25	4	Arkansas St	14
44	Calhoun, Don	HB	6-0	215	26	5	Kansas St	14
87	Chandler, Al	TE	6-3	228	27	5	Oklahoma	14
26	Clayborn, Raymond	CB	6-1	181	22	2	Texas (Austin)	14
22	Conn, Dick	S	6-0	185	27	5	Georgia	14
55	Costict, Ray	ILB	6-0	214	22	2	Mississippi St	14
39	Cunningham, Sam	FB	6-3	230	28	6	Southern Cal	14
76	Cusick, Pete	NY	6-1	255	25	3	Ohio State	0
38	Forte, Ike	HB	6-0	202	23	3	Arkansas	14
48	Fox, Tim	S	5-11	190	22	3	Ohio State	14
81	Francis, Russ	TE	6-6	240	25	4	Oregon	10
70	Gray, Leon	OT	6-3	255	27	6	Jackson St	11
14	Grogan, Steve	QB	6-4	205	25	4	Kansas St	14
71	Hamilton, Raymond	NT	6-1	250	27	6	Oklahoma	14
73	Hannah, John	G	6-2	265	27	6	Alabama	11
80	Hasselbeck, Don	TE	6-7	245	22	2	Colorado	14
40	Haynes, Mike	CB	6-2	195	23	3	Arizona State	14
24	Howard, Bob	CB	6-2	175	34	12	San Diego St	14
50	Hunt, Sam	ILB	6-1	250	27	5	Stephen F. Austin	13
23	Ivory, Horace	HB	6-0	197	22	2	Oklahoma	9
32	Johnson, Andy	HB	6-0	204	26	5	Georgia	0
74	Jordan, Shelby	OT	6-7	260	26	3	Washington (MO)	12
52	King, Steve	OLB	6-4	228	27	6	Tulsa	14
67	Lenkatis, Bill	C	6-4	252	32	11	Penn State	14
72	Lunsford, Mel	DE	6-3	260	27	6	Central St (OH)	14
34	McCray, Prentice	S	6-1	190	27	5	Arizona State	14
78	McGee, Tony	DE	6-4	250	29	8	Bishop (TX)	14
66	McKay, Bob	OT	6-5	265	27	9	Texas	12
—	Montgomery, Greg	ILB	6-2	230	21	1	Alabama	0
86	Morgan, Stanley	WR	5-10	180	22	2	Tennessee	14
57	Nelson, Steve	ILB	6-2	228	27	5	No Dakota State	13
77	Neville, Tom	OT	6-4	255	34	13	Mississippi St	14
17	Owen, Tom	QB	6-1	200	26	5	Wichita St	14
2	Patrick, Mike	P	6-0	195	26	4	Mississippi St	14
35	Phillips, Jess	FB	6-1	210	32	11	Michigan St	14
53	Romanisyn, Jim	ILB	6-1	220	26	5	Edinboro (PA) St	0
56	Shoate, Rod	OLB	6-1	215	25	3	Oklahoma	14
1	Smith, John	K	6-0	190	29	5	Southampton (Eng)	14
84	Stingley, Darryl	WR	6-0	193	27	6	Purdue	14
83	Sturt, Fred	G	6-4	255	25	4	Bowling Green	14
51	Voegele, Jerry	ILB	6-3	235	21	1	Michigan	0
83	Westbrook, Don	WR	5-10	188	22	2	Nebraska	13
51	Zabel, Steve	OLB	6-4	228	30	9	Oklahoma	11

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made his biggest (and we mean BIG!) contribution as a kick returner. All Clayborn did last season was average a brilliant 31.0 yards running back kickoffs to lead the entire NFL, including three touchdown returns that covered distances of 101, 100 and 93 yards. And, mister, that's what you call "big-play" ability!

On duty at strong safety is dependable veteran Prentice McCray, tied for second on the team in '77 with four pass interceptions. Rounding out the starting crew in the deep zones is free safety Tim Fox, who tackles hard, seldom gets caught out of position and, generally speaking, has all the makings of a future All-Pro. Supplying depth at the safety positions are Doug Beaudoin (strong side) and Dick Conn (weak side).

Handling place kicking duties for the Pats is John Smith, who converted 33 of 33 PATs along with 15 of 21 field goal attempts last season. And just for the record, Smith was the only regular kicker in the AFC to bat 100% on extra points in '77. Punting chores are taken care of by Mike Patrick, who doesn't kick for a great average (36.2 a year ago) but has good hang time and accuracy.

**GAMEPLAN CONCLUSION:** There was frustration a-plenty for Coach Chuck Fairbanks and his Patriots last season, when they toppled back to third place in

the AFC East and only briefly were in contention for a playoff berth. Quite a comedown, we might add, for a team that looked to be a Super Bowl contender! But all that's ancient history now with the '78 NFL season on tap. Once again, we'll go out on that old tottering limb and tab this latest edition of Pats as a title threat in their own division (the East) and the entire American Conference. How could you surmise otherwise with a coach like Fairbanks calling the shots for a group of players who—pound for pound—stack up to the best in pro football! The question, of course, where the Patriots are concerned is motivation. That, and something called "harmony", which may not count for much in the stat charts but goes a long way toward winning games on the field. These are two attributes the Pats either lacked or had very little of last season, and they'll have to re-capture those missing intangibles if they want to take it to the limit this time around. On offense, like we said earlier, the Pats are deep in most every area, although we do have to wonder about the reserve situation at quarterback—especially when you consider the scrambling, no-holds-barred playing style of regular signal caller Grogan. Provided Grogan stays healthy, so should the offense, which has the capability to roll up yardage and points through

the air lanes as well as via the ground route. The offensive line may undergo slight change if guard Hannah has his way and is traded to another team, but we doubt his absence will hurt the overall performance all that much. Figure it this way: with offensive standouts like Grogan, Cunningham, Stingley, Francis, Morgan, Lenkatis, Gray, Neville and etc. how could the departure of just one lineman—even one as good as Hannah—really hurt all that much? The same applies to the defensive unit, which is deep in every area and thus able to repulse opponents either by air or by land. Oh, there's no question that some of the Patriot defenders (like Howard, Barnes and Zabel) aren't as young as they once were. However, with the plethora of outstanding young prospects the Pats have on defense, we seriously doubt this unit will go into any sort of a tailspin even if they do make a few changes in starting personnel. In his six years at the team's helm, Chuck Fairbanks has assembled a wealth of talented players in New England, both offensively and defensively, and the Patriots seem destined for great things now that the trials and tribulations of last season are over. In their own division, the AFC East, the Pats will have to really put out a 100% effort to finish ahead of Baltimore and Miami.

# Miami Dolphins

(10-4-0)

That call! That *blankety-blank* of an official's call—the one folks in Miami are still griping about though it's been months since it happened. You remember it. The call made in the waning moments of last year's final regular season game between Baltimore and New England, when an obvious fumble by Bert Jones was ruled (guess what?) as no fumble after all by official Fred Silva, thus enabling the Colts to go on and score the touchdown which gave them a 30-24 victory.

On the strength of that somewhat tarnished win, the Colts locked up the AFC East title along with an automatic playoff berth, both honors that would have gone to the Dolphins (who also finished 10-4) if it hadn't been for that controversial ruling. All we say is that it's a good thing a certain NFL official (guess who?) didn't spend the off-season vacationing in Miami—because if he had, some irate "Dolphins" might have tried to use him as bait on a shark fishing expedition!

Okay, so all that seems like ancient history now, with a brand new NFL season ready to kickoff. But it serves as a nice background if you want to get an accurate reading on the potential of this, Coach Don Shula's 8th edition of Dolphins.

Just for the record, Shula enters this year as the winningest active coach in the NFL (154-51-5), and on four separate occasions (with Baltimore once, the Dolphins three times) he's led his teams all the way to the Super Bowl. So, when you're sitting around talking about the

## 1978 Schedule

Sep 3	at New York Jets
Sep 10	at Baltimore
Sep 17	BUFFALO
Sep 24	at Philadelphia
Oct 1	ST. LOUIS
Oct 9	CINCINNATI
Oct 15	at San Diego
Oct 22	at New England
Oct 29	BALTIMORE
Nov 5	DALLAS
Nov 12	at Buffalo
Nov 20	at Houston
Nov 26	NEW YORK JETS
Dec 3	at Washington
Dec 10	OAKLAND
Dec 18	NEW ENGLAND

Lombardis and the other great coaches in pro football, don't forget to mention the venerable Mr. Shula—he's up there with the best of 'em.

**OFFENSE:** Another guy the Dolphins can be mighty proud of is their veteran quarterback, Bob Griese, and how much do you wanna bet that enemy defenders must have rued the day last summer that Bob decided to visit his local optician. Because the doctor discovered that Griese had a vision problem, he prescribed a pair of eye-glasses; and lo and behold, Bob could see better than ever—and he's been ripping apart opposing defenses ever since.

Last season, Griese rifled strikes on 180 of 307 (58.6%) passes, rolling up 2,252 yards via the air lanes, and his number of touchdown tosses (22) were the most in the NFL. Entering his 13th pro campaign,

Dolphins	1977 Results	Opp
13	at Buffalo	0
19	at San Francisco	15
27	Houston	7
28	at Baltimore	45
21	N.Y. Jets	17
31	Seattle	14
13	San Diego	14
14	at N.Y. Jets	10
17	New England	5
17	at Cincinnati	23
55	at St. Louis	14
17	Baltimore	6
10	at New England	14
31	Buffalo	14

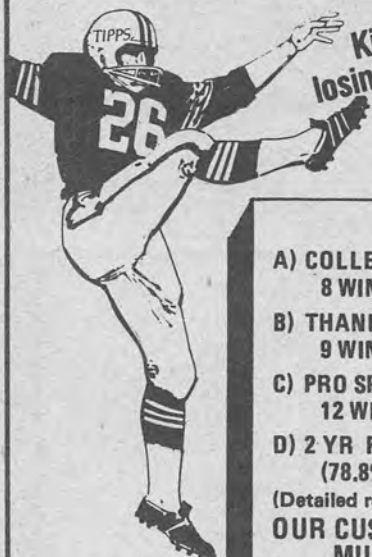
Griese is a polished veteran with championship experience, just the commodity needed to lead an explosive offense.

The No. 2 man at quarterback is Don Strock, but you have to question his ability to run the attack on a regular basis. In four pro seasons, Strock has seen very limited action (like just four pass attempts in '77), and his lack of experience might prove a handicap should he be called on in the event of (and God forbid!) an injury to Griese.

The Dolphins have always been known as a team that produced outstanding players at wide receiver, and the latest of their gems is Nat Moore, who detonated for 765 yards and 12 touchdowns (most in the AFC) on 52 pass receptions last season. Moore is a sure-handed receiver with great running ability in the open-field, and he can scare the blazes out of an op-



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ponent when he takes off on his patented "end-around" sweep.

Darting out of the wide receiver spot opposite Moore is Duriel Harris, a pretty fair pass catcher in his own right, having scampered for 601 yards and five TDs on 34 receptions in '77. On any other NFL team but this one, what with Nat Moore on the other side, Harris would surely be the No. 1 pass receiving threat—and having both of them is pure heaven for Coach Shula.

Not to be overlooked at wide receiver is four-year pro Freddie Solomon, who added 12 catches for 181 yards a year ago, scoring one touchdown on a 54-yard burst. Solomon was also the team leader last season in both punt (32 for 8.9 yard average) and kickoff (27.3 yard average, 90-yard touchdown run) returns, and he's got the ability to take over at wide receiver should one of the regulars come up hurting.

Balance is the by-word when it comes to Miami's rushing attack, evidenced by the fact four different players rushed for more than 400 yards in '77. Yet, the amazing fact is that as a group, the Dolphin ball carriers rolled up an average of 169.0 yards-per-game on the ground, and there wasn't another team in the league with a better average.

The top individual ground gainer a year ago was Benny Malone, who ripped for 615 yards on 129 attempts, and he's a punishing runner with the potential to reach the 1,000-yard plateau. But he's got two bad tendencies (injuries and fumbles) that he will have to overcome before he fulfills that kind of promise.

Supplying the outside speed in the rushing attack is Gary Davis, who sprinted for 533 yards (including one 60-yard TD romp) on 126 attempts in '77. Davis is the most dangerous ball carrier on the team, capable of going the distance any time he gets the ball, and he's another of those small-college products (Cal Poly) the Dolphins have been so successful at acquiring whenever draft time rolls around.

For example, last year's top draftee at running back, Leroy Harris, was often spectacular as a rookie in '77, rushing for 417 yards and four TDs, one of which covered a distance of 77-yards. Harris (5-10, 220) is a compact blockbuster who played college ball at little-known Arkansas State, a team you'll never see on ABC's game-of-the-week, and that just underscores what we said earlier about Miami's skill at finding diamonds-in-the-rough.

The remaining running backs are Norm Bulaich and Don Nottingham, a couple of work-horse types who excel in situations when it's third down and inches. Last season, Bulaich (4) and Nottingham (2) combined for a half-dozen touchdowns, several in clutch situations; and they're the kind of veterans needed to stabilize the running attack.

Holding down starting duties at tight end is Andre Tillman, who snagged 17 passes for 169 yards and two touchdowns a year ago. Tillman is a lethal blocker, the primary reason he's got the regular job, but his pass catching techniques need some refinement. There's excellent depth at tight end in the persons of one-time regular Jim Mandich, a good receiver but an indifferent blocker, and third-year pro

1977 LEADERS				
PASS	A/C	INT	YDS	TD
Griese	307/180	13	2252	22
Strock	4/2	1	12	0
REC	NO	YDS	AVG	TD
Moore	52	765	14.7	12
Harris, D.	34	601	17.7	5
INT	NO	YDS	AVG	TD
Johnson	4	35	8.8	0
Thomas	3	23	7.7	0
RUSH	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
Malone	129	615	4.8	5
Davis	126	533	4.2	2
PUNT	No	YDS	AVG	BK
Michel	35	1338	38.2	0
Selple	22	801	36.4	1
SCORE	TD	EP/MA	FG/MA	PTS
Moore	13	0/0	0/0	78
Yepremian	0	37/41	10/22	67

Loaird McCreary, who's been making his mark so far as a headknocker on the special teams.

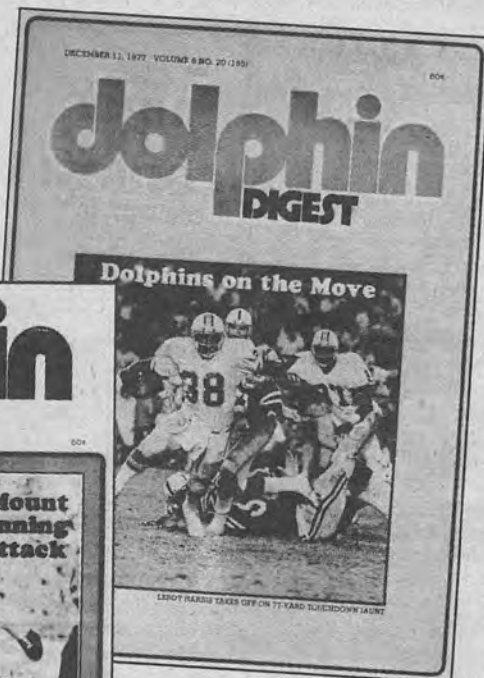
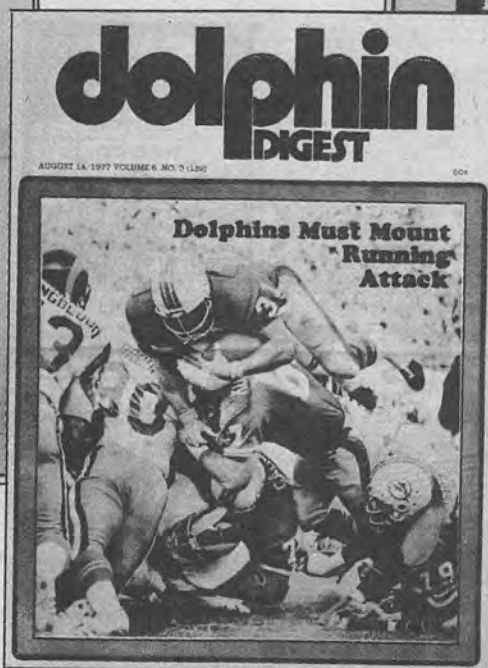
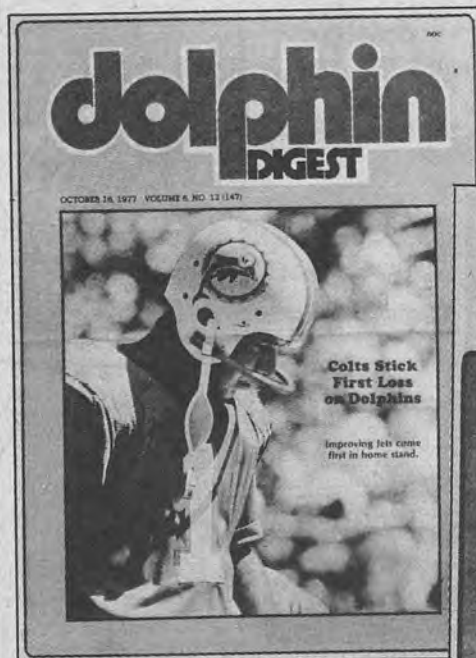
Your car doesn't go without gas, does it? Well, an offense doesn't go without an

1977 Regular Season Statistics		
	DOLPHINS	OPP
FIRST DOWNS	267	227
NET RUSH	2366	1749
Avg Per Game	169.0	124.9
NET PASS	1961	2233
Att/Comp	311/182	414/226
Had Int	14	15
Avg Per Game	140.1	159.5
PUNTS/AVG	58/36.9	67/38.5
Punts Return/Yds	40/315	29/267
Avg Per Return	7.9	9.2
KICKOFF-RET/YDS	38/1011	59/1281
Avg Per Return	26.6	21.7
FUMBLES/LOST	22/13	37/18
FIELD GOALS	10/22	12/20
PATS	37/41	21/23
TOTAL POINTS	313	197

outstanding crew in the trenches, either, which accounts for the great success of Miami's attack over the years. Guys like Jim Langer and Larry Little never seem to get old!

Miami Dolphins 1978 Veteran Roster								GAMES
NO.	NAME	POS	HT	WT	AGE	YRS	COLLEGE	IN '77
76	Alexander, John	DE	6-2½	250	23	2	Rutgers	14
85	Anderson, Terry	WR	5-9	182	23	2	Bethune-Cookman	11
49	Babb, Charlie	S	6-0	190	28	7	Memphis State	6
52	Ball, Larry	LB	6-6	235	29	7	Louisville	8
78	Barisich, Carl	DT	6-4	255	27	6	Princeton	3
73	Baumhower, Bob	DT	6-5	258	23	2	Alabama	14
	Bertuca, Tony	LB	6-2	225	29	2	Chico State	0
58	Bokemper, Kim	LB	6-6	245	24	2	San Jose State	14
31	Bulaich, Norm	RB	6-1	212	32	9	Texas Christian	14
51	Chambers, Rusty	LB	6-1	220	25	4	Tulane	14
44	Cornelius, Charles	CB	5-9	176	26	2	Bethune-Cookman	13
71	Current, Mike	T	6-4	270	33	12	Ohio State	14
27	Davis, Gary	RB	5-10	202	24	3	Cal Poly-SLO	14
83	Den Herder, Vern	DE	6-6	252	30	8	Central Iowa	11
77	Duhe, A.J.	DE	6-4	247	23	2	Louisiana State	14
75	Dvorak, Rick	DE	6-4	245	26	4	Wichita State	1
25	Foley, Tim	S-CB	6-0	194	30	8	Purdue	14
50	Gordon, Larry	LB	6-4	230	25	3	Arizona State	14
12	Griese, Bob	QB	6-1	190	33	12	Purdue	14
82	Harris, Duriel	WR	5-11	175	24	3	New Mexico State	14
38	Harris, Leroy	RB	5-9	220	24	2	Arkansas State	11
72	Heinz, Bob	DT	6-6	260	31	9	Pacific	14
45	Johnson, Curtis	CB	6-1	196	30	9	Toledo	14
57	Kolen, Mike	LB	6-2	222	30	8	Auburn	6
67	Kuechenberg, Bob	G-T	6-2	255	31	9	Notre Dame	14
62	Langer, Jim	C	6-2	253	30	9	South Dakota State	14
66	Little, Larry	G-T	6-1	265	33	12	Bethune-Cookman	14
32	Malone, Benny	RB	5-10	193	26	5	Arizona State	14
88	Mandich, Jim	TE	6-2	214	30	9	Michigan	14
53	Matheson, Bob	LB	6-4	235	34	12	Duke	14
80	McCreary, Loaird	TE	6-5	227	25	3	Tennessee State	14
17	Michel, Mike	P-K	5-10	177	24	2	Stanford	13
89	Moore, Nat	WR	5-9	180	27	5	Florida	14
79	Moore, Wayne	T	6-7	265	33	9	Lamar University	14
64	Newman, Ed	G	6-2	245	27	6	Duke	14
36	Nottingham, Don	RB	5-10	210	29	8	Kent State	14
65	Pesut, Wally	G-T	6-4	250	24	2	Kentucky	14
55	Rhone, Ernest	LB	6-2	212	25	3	Henderson State	4
59	Roberts, Guy	LB	6-1	220	28	7	Maryland	4
20	Selple, Larry	P-WR	6-0	214	33	12	Kentucky	13
10	Strock, Don	QB	6-5	220	28	5	Virginia Tech	4
41	Thomas, Norris	CB	5-11	175	24	2	Southern Miss.	14
87	Tillman, Andre	TE	6-5	230	26	4	Texas Tech	14
56	Towle, Steve	LB	6-2	233	25	4	Kansas	12
21	Volk, Rick	S	6-3	195	33	12	Michigan	3
24	Williams, Delvin	RB	6-0	197	27	5	Kansas	14
70	Windauer, Bill	DT	6-3	245	29	5	Iowa	0
1	Yepremian, Garo	K	5-8	175	34	11	No College	14
74	Young, Steve	T	6-8	263	25	3	Colorado	14

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Both of them All-Pros, center Langer and guard Little provide a solid nucleus in the middle of the offensive line, where they'll be joined again by guard Bob Kuchenberg, a battle-tested performer in his ninth pro season. Langer (age 31), Little (33) and Kuchenberg (31) are at the point where they should have just the right blend of stamina and experience, and their up-the-middle blocking power will continue to provide the needed running room.

Stationed at the tackle spots are Wayne Moore, a steady nine-year pro, and ex-Denver Bronco regular Mike Current. The Dolphins are a bit thin in the way of reserve strength in the front wall, where the only real prospect is guard Ed Newman. So don't be at all surprised if Miami makes a trade or two in an effort to remedy this shortcoming.

**DEFENSE:** "Out of the mouths of babes." That's an expression we've all heard a time or two. But if you twist it around a bit, so it sounds more like "out of the minds and bodies of babes," then you've come up with a pretty fair description of Miami's stellar defensive unit.

Last season, while finishing among the top defensive teams in the NFL, the Dolphins used (and you can look this up if you don't believe us) four different rookie players on a regular basis. But then, it isn't very often you see first-year players the likes of A. J. Duhe, Bob Baumhower, Norris Thomas and Vern Roberson.

Adam Joseph Duhe, or just plain old "AJ" to most pro football fans, is the nose-tackle in Miami's three-man defensive line, and he's one of those players with an uncanny knack for coming up with the "big" play at the most opportune time. Last season, Duhe led the team in quarterback sacks (7) and made 83 total tackles, and he's got the potential to be an All-Pro selection in the very near future.

His youthful counterpart in the front three, Baumhower, played every bit as well in '77, when he finished second on the team in tackles (131) and recorded four sacks. By the way, Duhe and Baumhower were Miami's Nos. 1-2 picks in last year's college draft, and that's the kind of daily double bonanza any pro football team would be delighted with.

Pinching in from the flank spot opposite Baumhower is eight-year pro Vern Den Herder, and his vast experience serves as a steadying influence on his young line mates. Den Herder missed the latter part of the '77 campaign with an injury, the first time in his NFL career he's been sidelined for that reason, but he's got the durability to rebound and take up his old position once more.

The reserve situation in the front wall isn't very stable, which is the big reason there was such a tail-off in performance last season when Den Herder got hurt. Foremost of the back-ups is Bob Heinz, a nine-year veteran, with additional help expected from former starter Bill Stanfill, back in action after missing all of last season with an injury.

The only trouble with a 3-4 defense, such as the Dolphins use, is that it puts a lot of pressure on the linebacking corps. And unless you've got a gang of head-knockers like Miami to back up the line,

## Miami Dolphins Rookie Roster

(Listed in order of selection)

NAME	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
Benjamin, Guy	QB	6-3	200	Stanford
Smith, Lyman	DT	6-6	228	Duke
Cefalo, Jimmy	WR	6-0	170	Penn State
Small, Gerald	DB	6-0	180	San Jose State
Laakso, Eric	T	6-5	271	Tulane
Burgmeier, Ted	DB	5-11	179	Notre Dame
Bettters, Doug	DE	6-4	250	Nevada-Reno
Baldischwiler, Karl	T	6-4	262	Oklahoma
Henry, Lloyd	WR	6-2	200	N.E. Missouri
Clancy, Sean	LB	6-3	215	Amherst
Hardy, Bruce	TE	6-5	230	Arizona State
Dennard, Mark	C	6-1	245	Texas A & M
Moore, Mike	RB	6-3	235	Middle Tennessee
Kemmy, Bill	QB	6-2	220	Northern Colorado

we wouldn't suggest you try this alignment.

Roaming far and wide from the middle linebacking spots are Steve Towle and Bob Matheson, who accounted for 138 and 130 tackles, respectively, last season. Matheson is a solid 12-year veteran noted for his always consistent play, while Towle is more the "wild bull of the Pampas" type. You know, the aggressive kind always out looking for some enemy running back to lay-the-wood to.

At the outside linebacking spots, the Dolphins have another outstanding duo in Larry Gordon and Kim Bokamper, both entering their third pro season. (It should be mentioned Bokamper missed his rookie year ('76) with an injury.) Ask any head coach in the NFL if he'd like to trade for the Gordon-Bokamper tandem and you can rest assured that 99 and three-quarters percent of them would fall all over their play books trying to make the deal.

Again, at linebacker, however, we run into that lack-of-depth problem, which could be a real headache with the team's 3-4 alignment. Two veterans capable of shoring up this area, provided they can avoid the injuries which kept them out of action in '77, are Earnest Rhone and Mike Kolen.

With injuries and personnel changes, Miami's defensive secondary turned in a commendable performance, aided-and-abetted of course by the team's relentless pass rush. And with young ballhawks like Norris Thomas and Vern Roberson just that much more experienced this season, prospects can only be that much brighter.

Cornerback Thomas, a consensus pick on last year's all-rookie team, paced the secondary regulars in total tackles (95) and intercepted three passes in '77. Secondary partner Roberson, a free safety, also earned all-rookie honors a year ago, and it seems ironic that both of them (Thomas in '76, Roberson in '74) had previous NFL try-outs before hitting the jackpot with the Dolphins last season.

The remainder of the secondary consists of cornerback Curtis Johnson and strong safety Tim Foley, veteran competitors who combined for seven pass thefts a year ago. Put that seasoned duo (Johnson and Foley) together with young-bloods

like Thomas and Roberson, and it's good news all the way when you talk about Miami's starting crew in the defensive secondary.

Unfortunately, the bad news comes when you talk about the depth situation in the deep zones, which ranges from troublesome to HELP! Top receivers Rick Volk, Dick Anderson and Charlie Babb are battle-tested defenders, but advancing age and (in the cases of Anderson and Babb) nagging injuries have to make you question their durability.

Quick now, outside of O. J. Simpson and Roger Staubach, which NFL player do you see most in TV commercials? Placekicker Garo Yepremian of the Dolphins, who always seems to be endorsing some underarm thing-a-ma-jig or another. Not bad, would you say for a guy who converted 37 of 41 extra points and 10 of 22 field goals for just 67 points last season? Punting duties are capably handled by second-year pro Mike Michel, a 38.2 yard average kicker in '77 with good hang time and pretty fair accuracy.

*The Dolphins moved to strengthen their rushing attack by trading Freddie Solomon, Paul Roberson and their first and fifth round picks in the '78 college draft to the San Francisco 49ers for running back Del Williams. Williams, who rushed for 931 yards last season and 1,203 yards the year before, will probably nail down a starting job with the Dolphins, and he could crack the 1,000-yard plateau again running behind Miami's powerful offensive line.*

**GAMEPLAN CONCLUSION:** What can you say? That man—that Don Shula—he's gone and done it again. Built another powerful grid juggernaut in Miami, a team that just may have been scratching the surface of its potential last season when it came within one play (that call, again) of the AFC East title and a playoff berth. The Dolphins are a team that flattened out a bit after winning back-to-back Super Bowls ('72 and '73), but one that is ready to rise to that plateau again. And with Don Shula, armed with his Super Bowl success in the past, who's to say it's out of the question this season. Offensively, you couldn't ask

for more than Griese at quarterback, nor could Griese ask for much better targets than Moore, Harris, Solomon, Tillman, Mandich and etc. Combine all that and you've got the ingredients for an explosive aerial attack. The rushing phase of the offense is first-rate as well, despite the fact the Dolphins don't boast any big names on the order of the Paytons and Simpsons. The offensive line is also top-notch, and should continue to be as long

as no unforeseen events (such as a rash of injuries) occur. The entire defensive unit is plagued by exactly that same problem—lack of quality depth. And unless the Den Herders, Towles and Babbs can stay healthy, genuine problems are sure to develop. This is a promising, in fact, a very promising team Coach Shula leads into the '78 NFL season, one which has the potential (don't forget last year's Denver rags-to-riches story) to go all the

way to the Super Bowl. The most obvious route into the playoffs for Miami is by winning the AFC East title, although Baltimore and New England will surely have something to say about that. But under the newly revised NFL scheduling format, which allows for two wild card entries from each conference, the Dolphins certainly have the horses to win enough games to claim a spot in the championship playoffs.

# Baltimore Colts

(10-4-0)

So now it's 0-3 for the Colts, winners of the AFC East title the past three years, but a first round loser each time in the championship playoffs. And all this happening to a team whose emblem is the horseshoe which, according to ancient legend, is supposed to bring good luck. Oh, well, so much for silly old legends.

Their last playoff defeat was the most heart-breaking for Coach Ted Marchibroda's gridders, a 37-31 double overtime loss to Oakland in a game the Colts seemed to have "locked up" until the Raiders pulled out the win with a tremendous rally late in the contest. And following that setback, an absolute pall descended on the city of Baltimore, whose inhabitants love their football Colts more than anything with the possible exception of fresh sea food from the near-by Chesapeake Bay.

Obviously, as they prepare for the upcoming NFL season, the \$64 question concerning the Colts is, can they end their playoff drought? It's very possible, because this is a solid football team Coach Marchibroda will be leading into battle. But, and this is a very large BUT, before the Colts can even start thinking about the playoffs, they'll first have to extend their title reign in the AFC East. And that's no small undertaking with opponents like the Miami Dolphins and New England Patriots breathing down their necks.

**OFFENSE:** Barking signals for an explosive offense that boasts great pass-run balance is Bert Jones, who ranked third among AFC passers last season when he tossed strikes on 224 of 393 aeriels, with 17 of those completions going for touchdowns. There are some critics who claim that Jones is not a "championship" quarterback, citing his team's playoff losses in the past. But it seems ridiculous, if not downright ludicrous, to blame the failures of an entire team on one individual player. C'mon, you critics, get your heads out of the sand!

Mike Kirkland, a promising third-year pro, is next in line at the signal calling spot. Kirkland hasn't seen an awful lot of action thus far, but with more experience, he could be a regular for the Colts or a lot of other NFL teams. Also on hand at quarterback is Bill Troup, although if he were called upon to run the attack, it would probably be only a stop-gap measure.

The passing attack was fairly productive overall last season, chalking

1978 Schedule		
Sep 4	at Dallas	
Sep 10	MIAMI	
Sep 18	at New England	
Sep 24	at Buffalo	
Oct 1	PHILADELPHIA	
Oct 8	at St. Louis	
Oct 15	NEW YORK JETS	
Oct 22	DENVER	
Oct 29	at Miami	
Nov 6	WASHINGTON	
Nov 12	at Seattle	
Nov 19	CLEVELAND	
Nov 26	NEW ENGLAND	
Dec 3	at New York Jets	
Dec 9	at Pittsburgh	
Dec 17	BUFFALO	

up 176.1 yards-per-game, but the "bomb" threat was missing primarily because wide receiver Roger Carr had an off-year due to a contract holdout and later, an injury. Carr managed just 11 receptions, only one for a touchdown, during a frustrating '77 campaign; but now that he's healthy again, he should re-establish himself as one of the game's foremost deep threats.

There's a wide-open race for the starting job at the other wide receiver, involving Glenn Doughty, Freddie Scott, Ricky Thompson and Randy Burke. Also in the competition are Marshall Johnson and Howard Satterwhite, but they're "long shots" at best. Six-year veteran Doughty pranced for 435 yards and four TDs on 28 receptions last season, while Scott notched another 18 catches for 267 yards, and they are the most experienced of the candidates. However, both may end up taking a back seat to Burke, the Colts' No. 1 draft pick last year, back in action after missing the '77 campaign

Colts	1977 Results	Opp
29	at Seattle	14
20	at N.Y. Jets	12
17	Buffalo	14
45	Miami	28
17	at Kansas City	6
3	at New England	17
31	Pittsburgh	21
10	Washington	3
31	at Buffalo	13
33	N.Y. Jets	12
13	at Denver	27
6	at Miami	17
10	Detroit	13
30	New England	24

with an injury.

The tight end spot is the stomping ground of Ray Chester, a durable veteran who wrapped his big mitts around 31 passes last year, which he hauled for 556 yards and three touchdowns, including one 78-yard scoring gallop. In reserve at tight end are Mack Alston and Jimmie Kennedy. Alston has played out his option, and may wind up inking a contract with another team.

Mere words don't seem adequate to describe the wheelhorse of the rushing attack, Lydell Mitchell, who paced the Colts last season in both rushing yardage (1,159 on 301 carries) and pass receptions (71 for 620 yards). That was the fourth consecutive year Mitchell led the team in rushing and pass receiving, establishing him as one of the most versatile running backs in NFL history. Oh, and just for the record, Mitchell is also the leading ground gainer in team history, his career total surpassing that of such former greats as Lenny Moore, Tom Matte and

## Baltimore Colts Rookie Roster

(Listed in order of selection)

NAME	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
McCall, Reese	TE	6-7	224	Auburn
Woods, Mike	LB	6-2	225	Cincinnati
Meyers, Frank	T	6-4	255	Texas A & M
Garry, Ben	RB	6-0	193	Southern Miss
Logan, Jeff	RB	5-10	184	Ohio State
Anthony, Monte	RB	6-3	207	Nebraska
Studdard, Dave	T	6-4	242	Texas
Owens, Dallas	DB	6-0	194	Kentucky
Mason, Henry	WR	6-2	180	Central Missouri
Allen, Bruce	P	6-1	180	Richmond



Alan (The Horse) Ameche.

Barrelling out of the other running back spot is Roosevelt Leaks, a bone-jarring blocker who rushed for 237 yards on 59 sorties in '77. However, in order for Leaks to hang onto that job, he'll have to avoid getting hurt so much and stop turning the football over on fumbles.

The most seasoned of the reserve running backs is Don McCauley, a good short-yardage belter who notched 234 yards on the ground last season and finished second in pass receiving with 51 catches. Ron Lee, a 225-pounder with quickness, is also available, and he'll be a candidate for starting duties if he can avoid the injuries that have slowed his development.

Providing the firepower up front to make the offense click is a first-class blocking corps, and leading the charge is center Ken Mendenhall. Backing him up is capable veteran Forrest Blue, who handles all the long snapping for the team's punting and place kicking attempts.

Blowing out enemy defenders on the left side of the line are tackle David Taylor and guard Robert Pratt, a pair of young stalwarts who seldom get the recognition their outstanding play deserves. Pro Bowl tackle George Kunz and guard Ken Huff make up the right side of the front wall, although Huff is in danger of losing his spot to Elmer Collett, a former regular who sat out last season with an injury. Supplying depth up front are Wade Griffin (tackle) and Bob Van Dwyne (guard).

**DEFENSE:** Plagued by injuries and the early holdout of All-Pro end John Dutton, the Colts' defensive unit was below-par last season, surrendering an average of two touchdowns a game. Now, that may not seem like an awful lot of points to give up, but what you have to remember is that Baltimore's defense is usually as stingy as the late Jack Benny when it came to giving up his money.

Flankman Dutton anchors one end of the line, and once he rounded into shape in '77 he responded with six quarterback sacks and the kind of solid defense that earned him an invitation to the Pro Bowl for the third straight year. However, not all is hunky-dory where Dutton is concerned, because he's played out his option with the Colts, and as a free agent, could sign with another team.

Should Dutton ink a pact with a team other than Baltimore, those in line for his old flank spot will be Ron Fernandez and Mike Ozdowski. Ozdowski is an aggressive pass rusher with fine promise who could nail down the job if he's recovered from an injury that knocked him out all of last year, his first in the NFL.

Pinching in from the opposite flank is Fred Cook, who recorded nine sacks in '77 and led the down linemen in tackles with 65. Cook is a lightning-quick end who should have gone to the Pro Bowl last year instead of his more-publicized running mate, Dutton. It's just a matter of time until he plays in one of those all-star games.

On the inside, one tackle hole is filled by Mike Barnes, another Pro Bowl selection last year and the most consistent defender in the front four. The other tackle berth is manned by Joe Ehrmann,

1977 LEADERS					
PASS	A/C	INT	YDS	TD	
Jones	393/224	11	2686	17	
Troup	2/0	1	0	0	
REC	NO	YDS	AVG	TD	
Mitchell	71	620	8.7	4	
McCauley	51	495	9.7	2	
INT	NO	YDS	AVG	TD	
Blackwood	10	163	16.3	0	
White	7	84	12.0	0	
RUSH	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD	
Mitchell	301	1159	3.9	3	
Lee, R.	84	346	4.1	3	
PUNT	NO	YDS	AVG	BK	
Lee, D.	82	3142	38.3	9	
SCORE	TD	EP/MA	FG/MA	PTS	
Linhart	0	32/35	17/26	83	
McCauley	8	0/0	0/0	48	

1977 Regular Season Statistics		
	COLTS	OPP
FIRST DOWNS	269	210
NET RUSH	2123	1798
Avg Per Game	151.6	128.4
NET PASS	2465	2190
Att/Comp	395/224	382/181
Had Int	1	30
Avg Per Game	176.1	156.4
PUNTS/AVG	84/37.4	81/36.2
Punts Return/Yds	42/323	44/481
Avg Per Return	7.7	10.9
KICKOFF-RET/YDS	48/912	60/1514
Avg Per Return	19.0	25.2
FUMBLES/LOST	24/14	27/17
FIELD GOALS	17/26	11/20
PATS	32/35	24/27
TOTAL POINTS	295	221

### Baltimore Colts 1978 Veteran Roster

NO.	NAME	POS	HT	WT	AGE	YRS	COLLEGE	GAMES
								IN '77
83	Alston, Mack	TE	6-5	233	31	9	Maryland-East Shore	14
	Baker, Ron	OG	6-3	238	24	1	Oklahoma State	0
63	Barnes, Mike	DT	6-6	256	28	6	Miami (Fla)	14
47	Baylor, Tim	DB	6-6	191	24	3	Morgan State	13
44	Blackwood, Lyle	DB	6-0	190	27	6	Texas Christian	14
50	Blue, Forrest	C	6-6	260	33	11	Auburn	14
	Burke, Randy	WR	6-1	186	23	1	Kentucky	0
81	Carr, Roger	WR	6-3	196	26	5	Louisiana Tech	7
87	Chester, Raymond	TE	6-4	236	30	9	Morgan State	14
66	Collett, Elmer	OG	6-5	246	34	12	San Francisco St.	5
72	Cook, Fred	DE	6-3	243	26	5	S'thern Mississippi	14
55	Dickel, Dan	LB	6-3	230	26	5	Iowa	14
35	Doughty, Glenn	WR	6-1	205	27	7	Michigan	13
78	Dutton, John	DE	6-7	266	27	5	Nebraska	12
76	Ehrmann, Joe	DT	6-4	254	29	6	Syracuse	9
73	Fernandes, Ron	DE	6-4	255	27	4	Eastern Michigan	14
69	Griffin, Wade	OT	6-5	231	24	1	Mississippi	14
	Griggs, Perry	KR	5-10	180	24	1	Troy State	1
62	Huff, Ken	OG	6-4	262	25	4	North Carolina	14
80	Johnson, Marshall	WR	6-1	196	26	3	Houston	3
7	Jones, Bert	QB	6-3	212	27	6	Louisiana State	14
85	Kennedy, Jimmie	TE	6-3	230	26	4	Colorado State	9
15	Kirkland, Mike	QB	6-1	195	24	3	Arkansas	0
75	Kunz, George	OT	6-5	262	31	10	Notre Dame	14
40	Laird, Bruce	S	6-1	198	28	7	American Intntl.	14
48	Leaks, Roosevelt	RB	5-10	225	25	4	Texas	11
49	Lee, David	P	6-5	216	35	13	Louisiana Tech.	14
34	Lee, Ron	RB	6-4	228	25	3	West Virginia	13
2	Linhart, Toni	K	5-11	179	36	5	Austria Tech	14
58	Luce, Derrel	LB	6-3	227	26	4	Baylor	12
52	MacLeod, Tom	LB	6-4	224	27	5	Minnesota	14
23	McCauley, Don	RB	6-1	215	29	8	North Carolina	14
57	Mendenhall, Ken	C	6-3	250	30	8	Oklahoma	14
26	Mitchell, Lydell	RB	5-11	198	29	7	Penn State	14
	Moore, Ricky	DB	6-2	195	25	1	N.C. Central	0
42	Mumphord, Lloyd	DB	5-10	178	32	10	Texas Southern	2
31	Munsey, Nelson	DB	6-1	186	30	7	Wyoming	13
30	Nettles, Doug	DB	6-0	178	27	4	Vanderbilt	14
74	Novak, Ken	DT	6-7	264	24	3	Purdue	12
	O'Neal, Calvin	LB	6-1	235	24	1	Michigan	0
25	Oldham, Ray	DB	5-11	192	27	6	Middle Tennessee	14
	Olsen, Orrin	C	6-2	240	25	2	Brigham Young	0
	Ozdowski, Mike	DE	6-5	244	23	1	Virginia	0
61	Pratt, Robert	OG	6-4	248	27	5	North Carolina	14
28	Satterwhite, Howard	WR-KR	5-11	185	25	3	Sam Houston State	1
86	Scott, Freddie	WR	6-3	175	26	5	Amherst	14
54	Shiver, Sanders	LB	6-2	222	23	3	Carson-Newman	14
58	Simonini, Ed	LB	6-0	210	24	3	Texas A & M	14
27	Stevens, Howard	KR-RB	5-5	165	28	5	Louisville	12
64	Taylor, David	OT	6-5	284	29	6	Catawba	14
43	Thompson, Norm	CB	6-1	180	33	8	Utah	14
88	Thompson, Ricky	WR	6-0	176	24	3	Baylor	5
12	Troup, Bill	QB	6-5	215	27	5	South Carolina	14
67	Van Dwyne, Bob	OG	6-4	244	26	5	Idaho	9
53	White, Stan	LB	6-1	223	29	7	Ohio State	14
	Williams, Larry	DB	6-0	190	25	1	New Mexico State	0



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who had a disappointing '77 season when he was slowed by injuries, but should be back at top-form now that he's healthy again. The leading reserve at tackle is massive Ken Novak (6-7, 275), who just hasn't lived up to the high expectations of the Colts, who selected him in the first round of the '76 college draft.

Long a sore-spot in the Baltimore defense has been the middle linebacking position, but no more is that the case with Ed Simonini firmly entrenched there. (However, there are some who say the Colts need a bigger, stronger man in the middle of their second line of defense). Last season, Simonini led the team in total tackles with 115, and he recovered an amazing 13 fumbles. Wow, that's more fumble recoveries than most players get in an entire career!

Stationed at one outside linebacking spot is "big play" specialist Stan White, second in tackles in '77 with 89. And if you wonder why we call White a "big play" guy, listen to this. In six pro seasons, White has intercepted 23 passes, including an NFL record for linebackers with eight in '75, and seven more last season. Need we say more?

At the other corner linebacking position is Tom MacLeod, who plays strong defense against the run but needs to improve on his pass coverage. Supplying depth at the 'backer spots are Dan Dickel, Derrel Luce and Sanders Shiver, with additional help expected from Calvin O'Neal, returning after spending last season on the injured reserve list.

Another weak spot defensively in the past was the secondary, but things are looking up in this area, too. Enemy passers were able to complete only 47.4% of their aeriels in '77, while surrendering 30 interceptions, the majority of those aerial thefts courtesy of the tight-guard-

ing crew in the deep zones.

The leading exponent of aerial pilferage is free safety Lyle Blackwood, who signed with the Colts in '77 after being waived by the Seattle Seahawks and wound up leading the entire NFL with 11 interceptions. You have to wonder if, just maybe, the Seahawks aren't kicking themselves for ever having let Blackwood go.

Stationed at strong safety is Bruce Laird, who added three more pass thefts last season and led the team in kickoff returns with a 22.5 yard average on 24 runbacks. Depth at the safeties, which is adequate, consists of Tim Baylor and Ray Oldham, both rugged "hitters" and regular members of the special teams.

The cornerbacks are Norm Thompson, a former All-Pro signed after playing out his option with the St. Louis Cardinals, and Nelson Munsey, a quality duo who picked off three enemy passes each in '77. Doug Nettles, who led the special teams with 21 total tackles last season, is the foremost reserve at cornerback. Also figuring in the proceedings is Lloyd Mumphord, back on duty after an injury put him on the sideline last year.

Place kicking duties are the responsibility of Toni Linhart, second on the AFC scoring charts in '77 with 32 PATs and 17 field goals for 83 points. Punter David Lee, who averaged 38.3 a kick but had nine blocked last season, will have to improve if he doesn't want to find himself out of a job.

**GAMEPLAN CONCLUSION:** It's back to the drawing board for Coach Ted Marchibroda's team, a regular-season power but a post-season flop the past three years. On offense, the Colts certainly have the personnel to snap out of their playoff doldrums, since they're led by quarterback Bert Jones, a rocket-armed

passer and a leader with the ability to get the maximum out of the attack. Should Jones sustain an injury of a serious nature, however, it could be curtains for the offense because neither of the backups (Kirkland or Troup) look capable of filling the void. On the receiving end of the passing attack, there's talent a-plenty, and the "home run" ball will be more of a factor with Roger Carr operating at top form again. To say the rushing attack is a one-man show (Lydell Mitchell) would be a major understatement. And it's a rather unhealthy situation when you consider the high injury rate at running back in the NFL. Thus far, Mitchell has avoided getting hurt despite averaging about 250 carries and 50 pass receptions per season, and the Colts can only hope and pray that he stays healthy. The offensive line, which supplies adequate blocking for both the running and passing games, hardly needs mentioning when you note the tremendous success of the attack over the past few years. Defensively, the Colts have talent stock-piled at most every position, so much so, in fact, that even if John Dutton does go his merry way, we doubt it will cause any major tail-off in this unit's performance. Put it all together and you have a truly outstanding football team in Baltimore, one capable of making it four successive AFC East titles if the Colts can fend off the Miami Dolphins and New England Patriots. And just for the heck of it, since there'll be two wild card berths up for the taking in the American Conference in '78, let's say there is a very good chance the Colts, Dolphins and Patriots could all wind up in post-season action—one as the AFC East's regular season title winner and the other two as wild card entries. So, remember, if that comes about, you read it first right here in GAMEPLAN.

# New York Jets

(3-11-0)

Ah, the sweet bird of youth! A phrase that may go from being the name of a hit Broadway play to a battle-cry in Shea Stadium this season, since the youthful Jets of Coach Lou Michaels look ready to leapfrog from the old Joe Namath-Don Maynard era into the epoch of Richard Todd, Wesley Walker and Company.

Sure, on the surface, the won-lost performance (3-11) of last year's Jets hardly seems anything to get overly enthused about. But it should be noted that several of those setbacks (most notably to powers like Oakland, 28-27, and Pittsburgh, 23-20) were down-to-the-wire affairs that might just as easily have gone in the Jets' favor. In AFC East way-stations like Baltimore, Miami and New England, folks would be well-advised to keep an eye on Coach Michaels' resurgent ball club.

Entering just his second year at the team's helm, Michaels gets an "A+" for the job he turned in as a rookie skipper, when his hard-nosed approach had the team playing better than it has since those glorious Super Bowl days of a decade ago. Dedication and intensity can often

## 1978 Schedule

Sep 3	MIAMI
Sep 10	at Buffalo
Sep 17	SEATTLE
Sep 24	at Washington
Oct 1	PITTSBURGH
Oct 8	BUFFALO
Oct 15	at Baltimore
Oct 22	ST. LOUIS
Oct 29	at New England
Nov 5	at Denver
Nov 12	at Philadelphia
Nov 19	NEW ENGLAND
Nov 26	at Miami
Dec 3	BALTIMORE
Dec 10	at Cleveland
Dec 17	DALLAS

overcome a lot of flaws in pro football, and while the Jets—one of the league's youngest teams—are still apt to make the errors of inexperience that may cost them some games, they're also likely to win a few on the strength of sheer hustle.

**OFFENSE:** The maestro on offense for the Jets is the previously mentioned Richard Todd, and had it not been for a knee injury sustained mid-way through

Jets	1977 Results	Opp
0	at Houston	20
12	Baltimore	20
30	New England	27
24	at Buffalo	19
17	at Miami	21
27	Oakland	28
13	at New England	24
10	Miami	14
0	Seattle	17
12	at Baltimore	33
20	Pittsburgh	23
16	at New Orleans	13
10	Buffalo	14
0	at Philadelphia	27

last season, he probably would have turned in one whale of a performance. As it was, gimpy knee and all, Todd hit the bulls-eye on 133 of 265 passes (50.2%) for 1,863 yards and 11 touchdowns. Included among those '77 scoring aeriels was a long-distance 89-yarder to Wesley Walker, one of the game's fine young receivers.

The top honcho in reserve at the signal

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calling spot is Matt Robinson, an unheralded ninth round draft pick in '77 who filled in when Todd was sidelined with his knee problems. During his brief playing time a year ago, Robinson completed 20 of 54 aeriels (37.0%), yielding eight interceptions against two scoring passes. Also available is journeyman Marty Domres, a veteran signal caller picked up last year after previous tours-of-duty with several NFL clubs.

Running post patterns from one wide receiving spot is the previously mentioned second-year pro Wesley Walker, an elusive speedster who zoomed for 740 yards (21.1 yard average) and snared three touchdown aeriels on 35 receptions last season. Walker is a 4.4 sprinter who gets deep as well as anyone the Jets have had in some time, and an extra plus is his outstanding running ability after he's made the catch.

Stationed at the other wide receiver is eight-year veteran Richard Caster, who switched from tight end to a wide spot last season. Caster had some injury problems in '77 and managed only 10 receptions (his lowest pro total) for 205 yards and one touchdown. Caster is a big dude (6-5, 220) with great quickness for his size, and if he can stay healthy he'll join with Walker to give the Jets a really explosive deep threat.

One-time regular David Knight, who scampered for 129 yards on seven catches (18.9 yard average) a year ago, is the most seasoned reserve at wide receiver. Knight, however, finished the '77 campaign on the sidelines with an injury, and he'll have to rebound or the Jets will be hurting for depth at the wide spots. Many of the same things can be said about Shelton Diggs, another speedburner kayoed by injuries last season.

At tight end, there's Jerome Barkum, a former regular at wide receiver who led the team in touchdown catches (six) last year while snaring 26 passes for 450 yards. Barkum is without question the fastest tight end in the league, and he also has the size needed to be completely effective at his new position. Backing him up is second-year pro Bob Raba, whose duty last season was limited to special team play. As we see it, an injury to starter Barkum would create problems in this area.

Powering the rushing attack is Clark Gaines, a dedicated ball totter who led the club last season (for the second consecutive year) when he rambled for 595 yards on 158 carries. Gaines also enjoyed the rather unique distinction of leading the team in pass catching as well in '77, when he latched onto 55 aeriels for 469 yards while swinging out of the backfield.

Low-slung Scott Dierking (5-10, 215), a punishing runner, is the other running back, having bashed for 315 yards on 79 sorties a year ago. Dierking can go the forty in 4.6, good time for a guy his size, and he supplies the team with a potent inside running threat.

The quickest of the Jet ball carriers is second-year pro Bruce Harper, who ziped for 198 yards on 44 attempts last season. Harper, originally a free agent signee, was the team's ace kick returner in '77, when he averaged 12.5 yards on 34 punt returns and rocketed for 24.6 yards on 42 kickoff runbacks. Other veteran running backs on hand are Kevin Long,

Tom Newton and Charlie White—all in their second NFL campaign—and little Louie Giammona, a former regular who missed last season with an injury.

The Jets have the makings of a solid offensive line, especially if relative young 'uns like Marvin Powell, Darrell Austin and Dan Alexander—all of whom saw extensive duty as rookies in '77—continue to progress as expected. The elder statesman up front, and one of the league's most reliable blockers, is guard Randy Rasmussen, who consistently grades out as the team's best lineman. Sharing the guard spot opposite him is the second-

year duo of Austin and Alexander, while supplying depth are John Roman and Gary Gregory, the latter back in tow after sitting out last year with an injury.

Powell, a mobile 265-pounder and NY's No. 1 pick in last year's college draft, is set at one tackle; and off his rookie performance, he rates as one of the league's premier young blockers. Fending off enemy pass rushers at the other tackle is Garry Puetz, a five-year veteran, with backup support in the person of Jeff Bleamer, formerly a regular with the Philadelphia Eagles.

Manning the pivot spot is Joe Fields,

#### New York Jets 1978 Veteran Roster

NO	NAME	POS	HT	WT	AGE	YR	COLLEGE	GAMES
								IN '77
60	Alexander, Dan	G	6-4	245	23	2	Louisiana St	14
67	Austin, Darrell	G-C	6-4	252	27	4	So Carolina	9
83	Barkum, Jerome	TE	6-4	217	28	7	Jackson St.	14
77	Barzilauskas, Carl	DT	6-6	270	27	5	Indiana	9
71	Bleamer, Jeff	T	6-4	253	25	4	Penn State	8
72	Burton, Al	DE	6-5	265	26	3	Bethune-Cookman	6
—	Butler, Gerald	WR	6-5	210	24	2	Nicholls St	0
51	Buttle, Greg	LB	6-3	229	24	3	Penn State	13
88	Caster, Rich	WR	6-5	230	30	9	Jackson St	10
—	Coleman, Don	LB	6-2	227	26	3	Michigan	0
25	Dierking, Scott	RB	5-10	215	23	2	Purdue	14
80	Diggs, Shelton	WR	6-1	190	23	2	S'thern Cal	7
55	Ebersole, John	LB	6-3	235	30	9	Penn State	13
65	Fields, Joe	C-G	6-2	245	25	4	Widener	14
21	Gaines, Clark	RB	6-1	201	24	3	Wake Forest	14
45	Giammona, Louie	RB	5-9	180	25	2	Utah State	0
62	Gregory, Gary	C-G	6-3	252	23	1	Baylor	0
37	Hardee, Billy	CB	6-0	185	25	2	Virginia Tech	14
42	Harper, Bruce	RB-KR	5-8	174	23	2	Kutztown St	14
—	Harris, Mike	CB	5-8	175	24	1	Grambling	0
54	Helms, Ken	C-T	6-4	251	23	1	Georgia	0
63	Hennessy, John	DE	6-3	248	23	2	Michigan	14
52	Hennigan, Mike	LB	6-2	215	27	6	Tennessee Tech	14
—	Hughes, Mike	T	6-4	250	24	1	Baylor	0
—	Jenkins, Willie	S	6-0	190	24	1	Miami (Fla)	0
57	Jerome, Jim	LB	6-4	225	24	1	Syracuse	0
50	Kecman, Ron	C	6-2	252	28	1	Maryland	0
56	Keller, Larry	LB	6-2	225	25	3	Houston	14
—	Kelly, Roosevelt	DE	6-3	235	24	1	E. Kentucky	0
73	Klecko, Joe	DT	6-3	256	25	2	Temple	13
82	Knight, David	WR	6-2	170	27	6	William & Mary	10
5	Leahy, Pat	K	6-0	190	27	5	St. Louis	14
33	Long, Kevin	RB	6-1	205	23	2	So Carolina	14
27	Mabra, Ron	CB	5-10	170	27	4	Howard	3
68	Marshall, Tank	DT	6-4	245	23	2	Texas A&M	5
59	Martin, Bob	LB	6-1	223	25	3	Nebraska	5
—	Mathieson, Steve	QB	6-4	215	24	1	Florida St	0
—	Morgan, Robert	RB	6-0	230	23	1	Florida	0
69	Murphy, Greg	DE-DT	6-2	250	25	1	Penn State	0
44	Newton, Tom	RB	6-0	205	24	2	California	14
22	Owens, Burgess	FS	6-2	195	27	6	Miami (Fla)	14
53	Palewicz, Al	LB	6-2	220	28	5	Miami (Fla)	14
24	Parker, Artimus	SS	6-4	200	26	5	S'thern Cal	11
76	Pillers, Lawrence	DE	6-3	257	26	3	Alcorn St	13
—	Powell, Darrell	RB	5-11	200	24	2	Tenn-Chatt	0
79	Powell, Marvin	T	6-5	264	23	2	S'thern Cal	11
78	Puetz, Garry	T	6-4	265	26	6	Valparaiso	14
86	Raba, Bob	TE	6-1	222	23	2	Maryland	14
15	Ramsey, Chuck	P	6-2	195	26	2	Wake Forest	12
66	Rasmussen, Randy	G	6-2	255	33	12	Kearney St	14
17	Robinson, Matt	QB	6-2	198	23	2	Georgia	4
61	Roman, John	G-T	6-4	251	26	3	Idaho St	9
—	Rosette, John	T	6-5	250	23	1	Oregon	0
74	Salaam, Abdul	DT	6-3	260	25	3	Kent State	14
48	Schroy, Ken	S-CB	6-2	191	26	2	Maryland	14
23	Suggs, Shafer	SS	6-1	200	25	3	Ball State	9
38	Taylor, Ed	CB	6-0	176	25	4	Memphis St	14
14	Todd, Richard	QB	6-2	205	25	3	Alabama	12
39	Tyler, Maurice	CB	6-0	190	28	7	Morgan St	14
85	Walker, Wesley	WR	6-0	172	23	2	California	14
30	White, Charlie	RB	6-0	222	25	2	Bethune-Cookman	13

who, in addition to his solid play at center, also excels as a snapper on punts and placement attempts. Reserve strength at the pivot consists of Ken Helms and Ron Korman, the latter an ex-WFL player who sat out last season (his first with the Jets) because of an injury.

**DEFENSE:** For, lo, these many years the Jets biggest single handicap has been their defensive unit, which always seemed to surrender yardage and points with alarming ease. And while the present gang on defense still has a way to go, the future seems to bode better for New York because of the rapid development of some excellent young players like Joe Klecko and Greg Buttle.

Klecko, a defensive tackle, is a rough-and-tumble operator who led the '77 Jets with 8 quarterback sacks while getting in on 90 total tackles. And considering last year was his first in the NFL, the Jets are optimistic he will be a stalwart in their front wall for quite some time.

Opposite him at the other tackle is 250-pounder Abdul Salaam, not one of the biggest but probably one of the quickest players in the league at his position. Salaam, who logged four sacks and 97 total tackles last season, is another good young prospect just entering his third NFL year.

The biggest and "baddest" of the defensive tackles is Carl Barzilauskas (6-6, 275), the most gigantic thing this side of the World Trade Center. "Barzo" is a former regular who lost his first-string status last season when he banged-up his knee and went to the sidelines; but if he's back to top form again, look for him to

1977 LEADERS				
PASS	A/C	INT	YDS	TD
Todd	265/133	17	1863	11
Domres	40/17	1	113	1
REC	NO	YDS	AVG	TD
Gaines	55	469	8.5	1
Walker	35	740	21.1	3
INT	NO	YDS	AVG	TD
Owens	3	18	6.0	0
Buttle	2	54	27.0	1
RUSH	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
Gaines	158	595	3.8	3
Dierking	79	315	4.0	0
PUNT	NO	YDS	AVG	BK
Ramsey	62	2298	37.1	8
Carrell	14	557	39.8	1
SCORE	TD	EP/MA	FG/MA	PTS
Leahy	0	18/21	15/25	63
Barkum	6	0/0	0/0	36

make a strong bid to take back his starting job.

Roaring in from one line flank is Lawrence Pillers, credited with four sacks and a team-leading 126 tackles (77 solo, 49 assists) last season. Pillers has exceptional quickness for a man his size, so much so in fact that when he first broke in with the Jets ('76) he was projected as a candidate for a linebacking spot.

The other line flank was patrolled last year by Richard Neal, but he was traded to the New Orleans Saints in February, so his starting end spot is up for grabs. Hoping to win it are John Hennessy, entering his second pro season, and Al Burton, a free agent signee who previously played for the Houston Oilers. But we have a hunch that with Barzilauskas back, either

1977 Regular Season Statistics		
	JETS	OPP
FIRST DOWNS	195	283
NET RUSH	1618	2245
Avg Per Game	115.6	160.4
NET PASS	2002	2403
Att/Comp	360/170	377/215
Had Int	26	11
Avg Per Game	143.0	171.6
PUNTS/AVG	76/37.7	73/38.2
Punts Return/Yds	38/480	46/448
Avg Per Return	12.6	9.7
KICKOFF-RET/YDS	61/1374	45/946
Avg Per Return	22.5	21.0
FUMBLES/LOST	24/14	37/17
FIELD GOALS	15/25	10/21
PATS	18/21	34/39
TOTAL POINTS	191	300

Klecko or Salaam will move outside.

The real strength of the Jets' defensive unit rests with their aggressive linebacking corps, paced by strong side 'backer Greg Buttle, who has all the ear-marks of a future All-Pro. Buttle, a No. 1 draftee in '76, was in on an even 100 tackles a year ago, and he also intercepted two enemy passes, one of which he ran back 44 yards for a touchdown.

Popping enemy ball carriers from the other outside linebacking spot is Larry Keller, entering his third year with the Jets. Keller, who formerly played in both the Canadian league and the old WFL, took over a starting job last season when regular Bob Martin went down with an injury. But if Martin is healthy once more, he's a good bet to re-claim his

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starting job. Backing up the middle of the line is nine-year veteran John Ebersole, one of those players who seems to get better with age. Ebersole, third on the team last season with 103 total tackles, is a steady defender who plays equally well against both the pass and the run.

The Jets are knee-deep in reserves at linebacker, but the old adage is that quality and quantity are two different things, and problems may develop if the regulars (especially a stalwart like Buttle) don't stay healthy. On call should disaster strike are Mike Hennigan, Al Palewicz, Jim Jerome and, if he's recovered from an injury that sidelined him a year ago, there's also Don Coleman.

The weakest line in the Jets' defense is their secondary, especially at the corner-back positions, where Billy Hardee and Ed Taylor are stationed. Both Hardee and Taylor had nine pass deflections apiece last season, tied for most on the team, but unfortunately that's because enemy passers threw in their direction so often. After all, you don't see them throw that much at the Kenny Houstons (Washington) and Tommy Casanovas (Cincinnati) do you? Supplying depth at the corners is Maurice Tyler, a much-traveled veteran in his seventh pro season.

Actually, we're not saying the Jets are completely destitute in the secondary, because in Burgess Owens, they boast one of the game's better free safeties. Owens, a free-wheeling veteran of six pro seasons, led the team with three pass interceptions a year ago, and his total of 121 tackles (including 59 solos) were the second most among the defenders.

At strong safety, third-year pro Shafer Suggs has the potential to be a standout secondary regular, but so far his career has been marred by erratic play and an endless string of injuries. Spelling him are ex-Philadelphia Eagle Artimus Parker and Ken Schroy, both of whom can also fill in at the free safety spot if called upon.

The Jets are in need of a quality punter (a species that's hard to come by), someone who can better the performance of last season's regular, Chuck Ramsey, whose 37.1 yard average on 62 kicks left something to be desired. There's no problem when it comes to the team's place-kicking, handled by Pat Leahy, who split the uprights with 18 of 21 PATs and 15 of 25 field goals a year ago. Included among Leahy's '77 field goals was a 48-yarder, longest in his career, that helped the Jets to a 16-13 win over the New Orleans Saints.

**GAMEPLAN CONCLUSION:** Year number two of Lou Michaels' tenure as coach is bound to result in a better showing by the Jets, provided quarterback Richard Todd can stay healthy for the entire campaign. But, alas, the question is where can the New Yorkers go in their own division, the AFC East, with foes like Baltimore, Miami and New England? Scaling past that rugged opposition is tantamount to climbing Mt. Everest; and, realistically speaking, we just don't think the Jets have yet reached the point where they're ready to accomplish that feat. On offense, there's a good nucleus with players like Todd, receivers Walker, Barkum and Caster, and linemen Rasmussen and Powell. However, there's a pressing need

### New York Jets Rookie Roster (Listed in order of selection)

NAME	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
Ward, Chris	T	6-4	270	Ohio State
Merrill, Mark	LB	6-4	239	Minnesota
Shuler, Mickey	TE	6-3	213	Penn State
Donnell, Dodie	RB	6-2	219	Nebraska
Sidler, Randy	LB	6-3	218	Penn State
Jackson, Bobby	DB	5-10	168	Florida State
Robinson, Gregg	DT	6-6	230	Dartmouth
Armstrong, Levi	DB	6-2	185	UCLA
Earley, James	RB	6-1	232	Michigan St
Gaffney, Derrick	WR	6-0	176	Florida
Mock, Mike	P-LB	6-1	212	Texas Tech
Eppes, Roy	DB	6-0	172	Clemson
Grant, Reggie	DB	5-9	182	Oregon
Hutton, Neil	DB	5-11	175	Penn State
Richardson, Louie	DE	6-5	231	Florida St
Ryan, Pat	QB	6-3	205	Tennessee
Williams, Alan	P	6-2	190	Florida

for one or two more quality running backs, as well as more cohesion in the front wall, where a steady turnover in personnel has undermined the team-concept of play so essential in an offensive line. The defensive unit, while still in need of some quality ball-hawks to bulwark the secondary, is shaping up nicely. The front four, while admittedly young, is capable of getting much better as a unit with additional experience, a task that will be that much easier if guys like Barzilauskas can stay healthy. The linebacking crew, led by budding superstar Buttle, is first-rate all the way, although—like just about every other area of the team—a major outbreak of injuries here could prove disastrous. The kicking game is

half-good and half-bad, but the addition of a punter who can boot 'em high and long would alleviate the shortcoming. All things considered, the Jets have made steady progress since Lou Michaels took the helm. Inspired by the skipper's gungho spirit and absolute dedication, attributes that have rubbed off on the players themselves, this team has a good shot at playing .500 ball. But, again, that brings us back to THE PROBLEM facing the Jets, which is the division wherein they reside, the AFC East. Last season, despite their new-found spirit and team unity, the Jets could do no better than finish in fourth place. And that's a fate which we think lies in store for the New Yorkers again this year.

## Buffalo Bills

### 1978 Schedule

Sep 3	PITTSBURGH
Sep 10	NEW YORK JETS
Sep 17	at Miami
Sep 24	BALTIMORE
Oct 1	KANSAS CITY
Oct 8	at New York Jets
Oct 15	at Houston
Oct 22	CINCINNATI
Oct 29	at Cleveland
Nov 5	NEW ENGLAND
Nov 12	MIAMI
Nov 19	at Tampa Bay
Nov 26	NEW YORK GIANTS
Dec 3	at Kansas City
Dec 10	at New England
Dec 17	at Baltimore

(3-11-0)

It's out of the frying pan and into the fire for Chuck Knox, who resigned as head coach of the Los Angeles Rams to accept a similar position with the Bills. And Knox would be smart if he packed a few sets of thermal underwear when he departs southern California because he's sure to find the snowy tundras of Buffalo

Bills	1977 Results	Opp
0	Miami	13
6	at Denver	26
14	at Baltimore	17
19	N.Y. Jets	24
3	Atlanta	0
16	Cleveland	27
17	at Seattle	56
24	at New England	14
13	Baltimore	31
7	New England	20
13	at Oakland	34
0	Washington	10
14	at N.Y. Jets	10
14	at Miami	31

a lot harsher. In fact, it might not be a bad idea if Knox also tried to smuggle out a few of his old LA players since any resemblance between the Rams and Bills is merely coincidental.

The 41-year-old Knox faces the unenviable task of rebuilding the once-proud Bills, an internally-troubled team that has

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won only five regular season games (against 23 losses) over the past two years. But in the estimation of Buffalo owner and president, Ralph Wilson, Knox is tailor-made for that role.

"Chuck Knox experienced nothing but success (five NFC West championships in five years) with the Los Angeles franchise," Wilson comments, "and we know he's just the man to restore the Bills to a position of prominence in pro football."

Okay, we'll buy that, because given a few years to straighten out the mess that exists in Buffalo, Knox could get the Bills headed in the right direction. However, unless Knox is a miracle worker of the highest order, we just can't foresee him turning a sow's ear into a silk purse overnight.

Certain to be one of Coach Knox's first undertakings will be the restoration of Buffalo's offensive unit, which moved the ball with a fair amount of success last season but made enough mistakes (24 pass interceptions, 20 lost fumbles) to turn any coach's hair grey. Based on his past record with the Rams, Knox will probably go about this by installing an attack that's more run-oriented than the Bills were in '77, when they attempted 458 passes to 450 rushing plays.

**OFFENSE:** That offense was predicated on the aerial antics of quarterback Joe Ferguson, who established team records a year ago in passing attempts and completions (221 of 457) while rolling up 2,803 yards. Ferguson also accounted for 12 touchdowns through the air lanes in '77, but on the negative side, he gave up 24 interceptions and was sacked 36 times, always the price you pay for a pass-happy offense in the NFL.

Ferguson is a six-year pro who should be able to adapt should the Bills revert to their old ways, that is, running the ball the majority of the time. And his proven ability as a passer is an extra plus since it will keep enemy defenses from "stacking" against the rushing game.

The backup signal callers are a pair of second-year pros, Ken Johnson and Fred Besana, neither of whom attempted so much as one forward pass last season. The 205-pound Johnson is a strong runner, which could make him a dangerous option quarterback, but he'll have to establish himself as a passer and field general before he'll be ready to hold down the regular job.

Heading up the pass catching brigade is probably the most underrated wide receiver in the league, Bob Chandler, who ranked second in the AFC last season with 60 receptions for 745 yards and four TDs. Hardly a year goes by that Chandler doesn't turn in that kind of sterling performance, and one of these days the short-sighted individuals who do the all-star voting will get out of their Cliff Branch (Oakland)—Lynn Swann (Pittsburgh) rut and give Chandler the credit he deserves.

At the other wide receiver is Lou Piccone, who added 17 catches for 240 yards and two scores in '77, although we doubt he'll be able to hang onto the starting job this season. His main challenge will come from second-year pro John Kimbrough, a 4.5 speedster who averaged 20.7 yards on 10 receptions last season and returned 16 punts for an 11.5 average, including a 73-

yard touchdown romp.

Other wide receivers in the picture are John Holland and Lenny Willis, the latter a former member of the Minnesota Vikings acquired late last season. Holland is

a gifted pass catcher who was slowed in '77 by an injury, and he managed only eight receptions, but he's a candidate for starting duties now that he's healthy once more.

## Buffalo Bills Rookie Roster

(Listed in order of selection)

NAME	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
Miller, Terry	RB	6-0	186	Oklahoma St.
Hardison, Dee	DE	6-4	248	North Carolina
Hutchinson, Scott	DE	6-4	243	Florida
Johnson, Dennis	RB	6-3	235	Mississippi St.
Fulton, Danny	WR	6-2	200	Nebraska-Omaha
Sanford, Lucius	LB	6-3	214	Georgia Tech
Spaeth, Ken	TE	6-5	228	Nebraska
Smith, Eric	T	6-4	278	Southern Miss.
Celotto, Mario	LB	6-4	230	Southern Cal.
Powell, Steve	RB	6-1	210	N.E. Missouri
Grant, Will	G	6-3	245	Kentucky
Blanton, Jerry	LB	6-1	230	Kentucky
Crump, Richard	RB	6-2	215	Northeastern

## Buffalo Bills 1978 Veteran Roster

NO	NAME	POS	HT	WT	AGE	YR	COLLEGE	GAMES
								IN '77
60	Adams, Bill	G	6-2	246	28	6	Holy Cross	9
7	Baleman, Marv	P	6-4	215	28	7	Utah	14
11	Besana, Fred	QB	6-4	200	24	1	California	0
34	Braxton, Jim	RB	6-1	240	29	8	West Virginia	14
47	Brown, Curtis	RB	5-10	203	24	2	Missouri	7
81	Chandler, Bob	WR	6-1	180	29	8	S'thern Cal	14
29	Clark, Mario	CB	6-2	195	24	3	Oregon	14
35	Collier, Mike	RB	5-11	200	25	3	Morgan State	6
50	Collins, Greg	LB	6-2	235	26	4	Notre Dame	11
30	Cornell, Bo	LB	6-2	220	29	8	Washington	12
68	DeLamilleure, Joe	G	6-3	245	27	6	Michigan St	14
70	Devlin, Joe	T	6-5	250	24	3	Iowa	14
85	Dokes, Phil	DE	6-5	255	23	2	Oklahoma St	12
76	Dunstan, Bill	DT	6-4	255	29	6	Utah State	14
12	Ferguson, Joe	QB	6-1	195	28	8	Arkansas	14
78	Foley, Dave	T	6-5	247	31	9	Ohio State	13
36	Franckowiak, Mike	RB	6-3	225	25	4	Central Michigan	13
22	Freeman, Steve	DB	5-11	185	25	4	Mississippi St	14
88	Gant, Reuben	TE	6-4	225	26	5	Oklahoma St	14
43	Greene, Tony	S	5-10	175	29	8	Maryland	14
28	Harrison, Dwight	CB	6-2	185	30	8	Texas A&I	12
80	Holland, John	WR	6-1	190	26	5	Tennessee St	3
25	Hooks, Roland	RB	6-0	195	24	3	North Carolina St	14
51	Jilek, Dan	LB	6-2	225	25	3	Michigan	14
14	Johnson, Ken	QB	6-2	205	27	2	Colorado	0
24	Jones, Doug	S	6-2	205	27	5	Cal-State	14
73	Jones, Ken	T	6-5	250	26	3	Arkansas St	14
71	Kadish, Mike	DT	6-5	270	28	6	Notre Dame	14
82	Kimbrough, John	WR	5-10	165	24	2	St. Cloud St	14
52	Krakau, Merv	LB	6-2	230	27	6	Iowa State	14
72	Little, John	DT	6-3	250	31	9	Oklahoma St	12
5	Long, Carson	K	5-10	200	24	2	Pittsburgh	9
67	McKenzie, Reggie	G	6-4	242	28	7	Michigan	14
46	Moody, Keith	DB	5-10	170	25	3	Syracuse	14
79	Morton, Greg	DE	6-1	230	25	2	Michigan	9
56	Nelson, Bob	LB	6-4	232	25	4	Nebraska	11
59	Nelson, Shane	LB	6-1	225	27	2	Baylor	14
61	Parker, Willie	C	6-3	245	30	7	N Texas St	14
89	Piccone, Lou	WR	5-9	175	29	5	W Liberty St	14
26	Romes, Charles	DB	6-1	190	24	2	N Carolina St	14
54	Ruud, Tom	LB	6-3	230	24	4	Nebraska	8
87	Seymour, Paum	TE	6-5	245	28	6	Michigan	14
32	Simpson, O.J.	RB	6-2	212	31	9	S'thern Cal	7
55	Skorupan, John	LB	6-3	225	27	6	Penn State	2
83	White, Serman	DE	6-5	250	30	7	California	14
77	Williams, Ben	DE	6-3	245	24	3	Mississippi	4
86	Willis, Len	WR	5-11	185	25	3	Ohio State	4
38	Winfrey, Stan	RB	5-11	220	25	4	Arkansas St	0
53	Zelenick, Connie	C	6-4	245	23	2	Purdue	14

There's good news and bad news at the tight end position. The good news is that the Bills have a budding all-star in five-year pro Reuben Gant, who galloped for 646 yards and two touchdowns on 41 receptions last season. The bad news, unfortunately, is that Gant has played out his contract and become a free agent, and should he decide to sign with another NFL team, the tight end job will probably go to burly Paul Seymour (6-5, 250), a devastating blocker but only a run-of-the-mill pass catcher.

One player who will be delighted if Coach Knox does opt for a run-oriented attack is perennial rushing leader O.J. Simpson, who missed seven games last season after knee surgery yet still paced the team with 557 yards on 126 carries. The rumor mill has it that O.J. may wind up with another team this year since he's never been particularly happy playing in Buffalo.

However, we suspect the asking price for Simpson's services will go so steep that most teams will back off and O.J. will remain with the Bills. And, in that event, the explosive "Juice" will power the rushing attack and re-establish himself as one of the premier running backs in the game.

Barrelling out of the other running back slot is Jim Braxton, who blasted for 372 rushing yards (on 113 carries) and ranked second on the Bills with 43 pass receptions last season. Braxton is a 240-pound battering ram who excels in all phases of his position.

The foremost of the reserves at running back is three-year pro Roland Hooks, who stepped in last season when O.J. Simpson was injured and rushed for 497 yards on 128 attempts. Hooks is a slashing runner with good balance, although he doesn't have the long-distance potential of a healthy Simpson. Others on call are Mike Collier, Stan Winfrey and Mike Franckowiak, all acquired last year in an effort to bolster depth at running back.

In the offensive line, the Bills underwent some changes in their famous "Electric Company" last year with Mike Montler and Donnie Green dispatched to other NFL teams. But their absence didn't create any really serious problems in the front wall, which turned in another solid blocking performance. Leading the charge, as usual, was All-Pro guard Joe DeLamielleure.

DeLamielleure is a veteran Pro Bowler ('75, '76 and '77) with great straight-ahead blocking power, plus the quickness to get outside on sweeps, making him perhaps the most accomplished guard in the American Conference. Stationed opposite him is another polished veteran, Reggie McKenzie, while the top backup at guard is seven-year pro Bill Adams, who can also help out at tackle.

The regulars at tackle are long-time stalwart Dave Foley and promising Joe Devlin, who claimed a starting job in '77 when Donnie Green was traded and will be very hard to displace in the future. In reserve at tackle is third-year pro Ken Jones, an agile 250-pounder who started his pro career as a defensive end.

Over the ball at center is Willie Parker, promoted to a starting role following last year's trade of long-time regular Mike

Montler to the Denver Broncos. Supporting Parker at the pivot spot is second-year pro Connie Zelencik, who handles the snapping on kicking downs.

**DEFENSE:** Long the Achilles' heel for the Bills has been their defensive unit, although this gang has the potential to improve because of their relative youth and great enthusiasm. The problem, of course, has always been Buffalo's failure to acquire adequate defenders either via the college draft or the trade route, avenues where their past track record has left a great deal to be desired.

In the front wall, the flanks are patrolled by Ben Williams and Sherman White. Williams is a fast improving third-year pro with the makings of a top-notch flankman, but his running mate, White, has been a disappointment since the Bills picked him up in a trade ('76) with the Cincinnati Bengals.

Supplying depth at the end spots are Phil Dokes and Greg Morton, both entering their second pro season. Dokes was Buffalo's No. 1 pick in the '77 college draft, and while he still needs some additional seasoning, he's got all the tools to be an outstanding flankman.

Plugging one tackle hole in the defensive line is Mike Kadish, a powerful 270-pounder in his sixth NFL season. Kadish came to the Bills in '73 via a trade with the Miami Dolphins, and he's the most consistent performer in the front wall for Buffalo.

Sharing the other tackle berth are journeymen Bill Dunstan and John Little, both in their sixth pro campaign. Dunstan and Little play tough defense against the run, but they'll have to improve on their pass rushing if the Bills are to better the measly 17 quarterback sacks the team recorded last season.

The Bills have a fairly decent corps of linebackers, one that is young enough to get better with experience. However, unless the 'backers can stay healthy and cut down on their mistakes, this area will continue to be the weakest on the defensive unit.

Holding forth at middle linebacker is Merv Krakau, an aggressive veteran and the team leader in tackles the past two seasons. Supplying depth in the middle are Bob Nelson, Greg Collins and—provided he's recovered from an injury that sidelined him in '77—John Skorupan, who is also capable of filling in at an outside 'backer position.

The corner linebacking spots are manned by Dan Jilek (weak side) and Shane Nelson (strong side), both of whom need to improve their "drop" so they can play stronger defense against short passes. They're backed-up by the above mentioned Skorupan (a former regular on the outside), Bo Cornell and Tom Ruud, the latter a No. 1 draft pick ('75) who just hasn't produced as expected.

Without question, the strongest area on defense for the Bills is the secondary, where the pacesetter is Pro Bowler Tony Greene (free safety), second in the NFL last season with nine pass interceptions. Greene is a solid eight-year veteran and the big play specialist in the deep zones, plus he provides a steadying influence for what is an otherwise youthful corps of defensive backs.

Operating at strong safety is Doug Jones, who added two pass thefts on his own in '77, one of which he returned for a touchdown. Jones is a 205-pounder who really hits with a wallop, but his tendency to be overly aggressive is a hindrance because he gets hit with too many penalties. The most seasoned reserve at safety is Steve Freeman, often used as the fifth defensive back on passing downs.

Batting down passes—except for the ones he intercepts—and crunching enemy runners from one cornerback spot is Mario Clark, who swiped seven enemy aeriels last season. Entering just his third pro season, Clark is one of the league's premier young defensive backs.

Eight-year veteran Dwight Harrison protects the other corner, and he's probably the best one-on-one defender in the Bills' secondary. Kick return ace Keith Moody, who averaged 13.1 yards and scored once on a 91-yard scamper running back punts last season, is the best of the substitute cornerbacks.

WON 10, LOST 3  
Monday Night Football  
see page 45

**GAMEPLAN CONCLUSION:** Chuck Knox certainly has his work cut out for him in his first year as head coach of the Bills, and there will probably be times he'll wish he never took on this arduous assignment. Hard times of the worst sort have befallen this team, not the least of which are the ongoing squabbles between several players and the club's front office, the kind of situation that does not lend itself to internal harmony. Provided Knox can get things squared away and settle these little nit-picking matters, his first edition of Bills have the potential to expunge the memory of their miserable performances the last two years. On offense, it seems a foregone conclusion that Knox will go with a more run-oriented attack than his immediate predecessor (Jim Ringo) did. And with the likes of O.J. Simpson, Jim Braxton and Roland Hooks to do the ball toting—and blockers the caliber of DeLamielleure, McKenzie and young Devlin—the rushing game should roll up plenty of yardage. The passing game won't be completely overlooked, but we doubt quarterback Ferguson will attempt 458 aeriels as he did last season. Rather, the air attack will be used to balance out the offense, and it should succeed in that respect. Buffalo's defensive unit is improved over the recent past, and should get even better with young standouts such as Williams, Dokes (if he plays up to his potential) and Mario Clark. However, the defense is still a bit suspect at the linebacking positions, and overall depth on this unit doesn't look adequate to withstand any major outbreak of injuries. Given the fact the NFL will expand to a 16-game regular season format in '78, Coach Knox's maiden voyage at the Bills' helm should result in a greater number of victories for the team. But as far as markedly improving their winning percentage is concerned, something that is essential if Buffalo is to move higher in the AFC East, we honestly can't see that happening this season. The most that's in store for the Bills in '78 is from five to seven victories and a fourth place finish in their division.



# AFC CENTRAL



Franco Harris, Pittsburgh Steelers

# Cincinnati Bengals

(8-6-0)

When you examine this Cincinnati team on paper, you just have to believe the Bengals are capable of going all the way to the Super Bowl with the number of outstanding players they have lined up at most every position. But that day may never come unless Coach Bill "Tiger" Johnson's gridders can find a cure for their severe case of a disease known as "lose-aphobia"—a sickness that seems to make them blow all the really important games.

That strange ailment hit the Bengals again in last year's final regular season contest, when a 21-16 loss to the Houston Oilers cost them the AFC Central title and a playoff berth. And the thing that made that season-ending loss even more painful for the Bengals was because it allowed their hated rivals, the Pittsburgh Steelers, to literally "back into" the '77 AFC Central title.

Okay, all that seems like old hat now, with a brand new NFL season at hand. But it does serve to underscore what we said at the very outset. On paper, the Bengals are one helluva team with great talent at their disposal, but their championship potential will never be realized until they start winning the "big" ones.

**OFFENSE:** The play-calling maestro for Cincy's offensive unit is quarterback Ken Anderson, an eight-year pro and one of the finest passers in NFL history. Last season, Anderson was off-form a little, as he completed only 51.4% of his aerial attempts (166 of 323) for 2,145 yards, and he gave up just as many interceptions (11) as he threw touchdown passes.

It should be pointed out, however, that Anderson was hampered somewhat by injuries a year ago, but came on very strong at the end of the season when he was at top health again. If he can keep that momentum going in the coming campaign, Anderson should climb back up to his rightful place among the NFL's leading passers, and serve as the catalyst in the team's potent aerial attack. The Bengals are a mite thin in reserve strength at quarterback, where the top substitute is John Reaves, who managed to complete only 24 of 59 passes in '77 and gave up five interceptions against no scoring aeriels.

The chief threat and long-distance specialist in the pass catching corps is wide receiver Issac Curtis, who sped for 338 yards and two TDs on 20 catches during an injury-abbreviated '77 campaign. Curtis is a former All-Pro who missed the second half of last season following a knee injury and subsequent surgery, but he's back now, and his return should pay off with a stronger passing attack for the Bengals.

Billy Brooks, a third-year pro with blazing speed, holds forth at the other wide receiver. Brooks was the team's No. 1 pick in the '76 college draft, and he more than lived up to those high expectations last season, when he averaged an impressive 19.4 yards and snagged

## 1978 Schedule

Sep 3	KANSAS CITY
Sep 10	at Cleveland
Sep 17	PITTSBURGH
Sep 24	NEW ORLEANS
Oct 1	at San Francisco
Oct 9	at Miami
Oct 15	NEW ENGLAND
Oct 22	at Buffalo
Oct 29	HOUSTON
Nov 5	at San Diego
Nov 13	OAKLAND
Nov 19	at Pittsburgh
Nov 26	at Houston
Dec 3	ATLANTA
Dec 11	at Los Angeles
Dec 17	CLEVELAND

four touchdown aeriels on a team-leading 39 receptions.

There's excellent depth at the wide receiving positions, with Pat McNally and John McDaniel on call. A year ago, that duo combined for 29 catches, and the raw-boned McNally (6-6, 205) also finished second on the club with three scoring receptions.

Gallopig out of the tight end berth is long-time stalwart Bob Trumphy, a solid blocker who notched 17 pass receptions for 251 yards in '77. Backing him up at tight end are the second-year duo of Jim Corbett and Mike Cobb, both of whom have the ability to bid for the starting job with some additional seasoning.

As far as quantity is concerned, the Bengals are waist-deep in running backs, with a line-up that includes Archie Griffin, Pete Johnson, Boobie Clark, Lenvil Elliot and Tony Davis. However, unless one of those ball toters emerges as

Bengals	1977 Results	Opp
3	Cleveland	13
42	Seattle	20
3	at San Diego	24
17	at Green Bay	7
14	at Pittsburgh	20
13	Denver	24
13	Houston	10
10	at Cleveland	7
10	at Minnesota	42
23	Miami	17
30	N.Y. Giants	13
27	at Kansas City	7
17	Pittsburgh	10
16	at Houston	21

a consistent running threat, the rushing attack will continue to be the biggest shortcoming on offense.

The most promising of the Bengals' rushers is second-year pro Johnson, a 250-pound sledgehammer who battered for 583 yards and four TDs on 152 carries last season. Johnson's a bruiser who looks more like an offensive lineman than a running back. We'd be willing to bet he could play in the front wall if he was ever needed because in addition to his powerful running, Pete's also a bone-crunching blocker!

Scampering out of the other running back slot is Archie Griffin, who rushed for 549 yards on 138 sorties in '77. Griffin, a former two-time Heisman Trophy winner at Ohio State, has explosive running ability to the outside, and he's got the potential to crack the 1,000 yard rushing plateau now that he's more experienced at the NFL level.

## Cincinnati Bengals Rookie Roster

(Listed in order of selection)

NAME	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
Browner, Ross	DT	6-3	235	Notre Dame
Bush, Blair	C	6-3	240	Washington
Griffin, Ray	DB	5-9	177	Ohio State
Turner, D. "Deacon"	RB	6-0	220	San Diego St.
Vincent, Ted	DT	6-5	250	Wichita St.
Bass, Don	WR	6-2	215	Houston
Law, Dennis	WR	6-2	180	E. Tennessee St.
Dinkel, Tom	LB	6-2	220	Kansas
Hertel, Rob	QB	6-2	185	Southern Cal.
Geise, Steve	RB	6-1	202	Penn State
Branson, Joe	DB	6-0	180	Livingstone
Bass, Dan	G	6-3	250	Elon
Miller, Bill	T	6-4	250	Western Illinois
Shumon, Ron	LB	6-2	225	Wichita St.
DePaso, Tom	LB	6-2	219	Penn State
Prince, Calvin	RB	5-9	198	Louisville
Donahue, Mark	G	6-3	242	Michigan
Featsent, Kim	WR	6-1	187	Kent State



Boobie Clark and Lenvil Elliot are the other running backs most likely to be called upon, having rushed for an aggregate 484 yards a year ago. The remaining ball carrier, the guy the Bengals call "Tough Tony" (Davis), doesn't get all that much exposure as a running back. But as a regular on the special teams, "Tough Tony" is one of the best around at that particular form of mayhem.

In the offensive line, the Bengals are pretty well-stocked when it comes to solid blockers, although there could be a hole in the front wall if veteran center Bob Johnson decides to retire. Now, we're not saying that's going to happen; in fact, we hope it doesn't because he's always been a solid pivot man. But after 10 rugged NFL seasons, Johnson is said to be considering retirement, and if he does pack it in the front wall is certain to miss his steady leadership.

On a more promising note, the tackle berths are manned by Rufus Mayes and Vernon Holland, a battle-tested duo that excels at pass protection. Supplying depth at tackle is third-year pro Ron Hunt, a mountainous 285-pounder who needs to play less like the gentle giant and more like the second coming of Godzilla.

Kicking out from one guard hole is Dave Lapham, a fine young blocker in his fifth NFL season. Opposite him is John Shimmers, but he's in danger of losing his starting job to promising Glenn Bujnoch. Additional depth at guard is supplied by Greg Fairchild, who can also fill in at center, which he may have to do on a full-time basis if long-time pivot Bob Johnson does hang 'em up.

**DEFENSE:** When you talk about great top-to-bottom strength where the Bengals are concerned, you're talking about their defense, which boasts standout players in every area. And the best part of it is that the regulars who make up this unit are young enough (especially linemen Eddie Edwards and Wilson Whitley) to continue to play rock-ribbed defense for many more years.

In the front wall, the tackle spots are manned by the previously mentioned duo of Edwards and Whitley, a pair of young terrors (both only second-year pros) seemingly destined for banner careers. First to get the call, should either of the tackle regulars need a breather, will be Walter Johnson, a former Cleveland Brown regular and a seasoned veteran in his 14th NFL year.

Chasing down enemy quarterbacks from one line flank is Pro Bowler Coy Bacon, a 270-pounder who looks like a run-away train when he comes barreling in on the pass rush. Bacon's also a good "stay-at-home" defender when it comes to stopping the run, and this kind of versatility is the reason he's looked upon as one of the NFL's premier defensive ends.

Patrolling the other line flank is third-year pro Gary Burley, an ever-improving youngster whose progress was slowed when he missed his entire rookie season ('75) with an injury. Burley's a muscular 260-pounder with above-average quickness, but what strikes you most about this dude is the way he hits opponents—crash, thump, that's all she wrote!

Backing up the middle of the line is

1977 LEADERS					
PASS	A/C	INT	YDS	TD	
Anderson	323/166	11	2145	11	
Reaves	59/24	5	383	0	
REC	NO	YDS	AVG	TD	
Brooks	39	772	19.8	4	
Elliott	29	238	8.2	1	
INT	NO	YDS	AVG	TD	
Parrish	3	95	31.6	1	
Williams	3	67	22.3	1	
RUSH	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD	
Johnson, P.	152	583	3.8	4	
Griffin	138	549	4.0	0	
PUNT	NO	YDS	AVG	BK	
McInally	67	2802	41.8	3	
Bahr	2	88	44.0	0	
SCORE	TD	EP/MA	FG/MA	PTS	
Bahr	0	25/26	19/27	82	
Brooks	4	0/0	0/0	24	
Johnson, P.	4	0/0	0/0	24	

veteran Jim LeClair, a former Pro Bowl selection ('76) entering his seventh NFL season. LeClair is an aggressive defender with the quickness to cover a lot of territory, something that's absolutely essential for a middle linebacker in pro football.

Rounding out the starting threesome are the outside 'backers, Reggie Williams

1977 Regular Season Statistics		
	BENGALS	OPP
FIRST DOWNS	247	251
NET RUSH	1836	1906
Avg Per Game	131.1	136.1
NET PASS	2333	2227
Att/Comp	385/192	351/196
Had Int	16	16
Avg Per Game	166.6	159.1
PUNTS/AVG	69/41.9	72/39.2
Punts Return/Yds	41/328	38/250
Avg Per Return	8.0	6.6
KICKOFF-RET/YDS	46/879	49/1029
Avg Per Return	19.1	21.0
FUMBLES/LOST	37/16	34/23
FIELD GOALS	19/27	11/18
PATS	25/26	26/29
TOTAL POINTS	238	235

(weak side) and Bo Harris (strong side). Williams is a tough defender against the run who also plays heads-up defense against the pass, evidenced by the fact that he swiped three enemy passes last season and returned one of them 54 yards to paydirt.

The Bengals have pretty fair depth at linebacker, and heading up the reserve

Cincinnati Bengals 1978 Veteran Roster								GAMES
NO	NAME	POS	HT	WT	AGE	YR	COLLEGE	IN '77
31	Anderson, Jerry	CB	5-11	198	25	2	Oklahoma	14
14	Anderson, Ken	QB	6-2	210	29	8	Augustana, Ill.	14
79	Bacon, Coy	DE	6-4	265	36	11	Jackson State	12
10	Bahr, Chris	K	5-9	168	25	3	Penn State	14
34	Breeden, Louis	CB	5-11	181	25	1	N Carolina St	0
82	Brooks, Billy	WR	6-3	202	25	3	Oklahoma	14
74	Bujnoch, Glenn	G	6-5	251	25	3	Texas A&M	13
67	Burley, Gary	DE	6-3	265	26	3	Pittsburgh	14
50	Cameron, Glenn	LB	6-1	217	25	4	Florida	14
37	Casanova, Tom	S	6-2	196	28	7	LSU	11
42	Clark, Boobie	RB	6-2	242	28	6	Bethune-Cookman	10
24	Cobb, Marvin	S	6-0	191	25	4	USC	14
89	Cobb, Mike	TE	6-5	248	23	2	Michigan State	13
81	Corbett, Jim	TE	6-3	214	23	2	Pittsburgh	14
85	Curtis, Isaac	WR	6-1	192	28	6	San Diego St	8
25	Davis, Tony	RB	5-10	210	25	3	Nebraska	14
51	Devlin, Chris	LB	6-2	228	25	3	Penn State	0
73	Edwards, Eddie	DT	6-4	256	24	2	Miami	12
36	Elliott, Lenvil	RB	6-0	208	27	6	NE Missouri St	14
63	Fairchild, Greg	G-T	6-4	257	24	3	Tulsa	13
45	Griffin, Archie	RB	5-9	193	24	3	Ohio State	12
53	Harris, Bo	LB	6-3	221	25	4	LSU	14
83	Holden, Steve	WR-KR	6-1	200	27	6	Arizona	6
76	Holland, Vernon	T	6-5	265	30	8	Tennessee St	14
72	Hunt, Ron	T	6-6	255	23	3	Oregon	13
54	Johnson, Bob	C	6-5	256	32	11	Tennessee	14
80	Johnson, Ken	DE	6-6	258	31	8	Indiana	10
46	Johnson, Pete	RB	6-0	240	24	2	Ohio State	14
62	Lapham, Dave	G	6-4	259	26	5	Syracuse	13
55	LeClair, Jim	LB	6-3	238	28	7	North Dakota	14
71	Mayes, Rufus	T	6-5	256	31	10	Ohio State	12
86	McDaniel, John	WR	6-1	197	27	5	Lincoln	14
87	McInally, Pat	WR	6-6	210	25	3	Harvard	14
21	Morgan, Melvin	CB	6-0	186	25	3	Mississippi Valley	12
20	Parrish, Lemar	CB	5-10	183	31	9	Lincoln	11
32	Perry, Scott	CB	6-0	182	24	3	Williams	9
59	Phillips, Ray	LB	6-3	221	24	2	Nebraska	14
11	Reaves, John	QB	6-3	210	28	7	Florida	9
13	Riley, Ken	CB	6-0	185	31	10	Florida	14
30	Shelby, Willie	RB	5-11	198	25	3	Alabama	14
84	Trumpy, Bob	TE	6-5	228	33	11	Utah	12
88	Walker, Rick	TE	6-3	237	23	2	UCLA	6
15	Wells, Mike	QB	6-5	225	27	4	Illinois	7
75	Whitley, Wilson	DT	6-3	264	23	2	Houston	13
57	Williams, Reggie	LB	6-1	228	24	3	Dartmouth	14

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corps are Glenn Cameron and Ray Phillips. Thus far, Cameron and Phillips have earned their spurs mostly as head-knockers on the special teams, but now their apprenticeship has been served, and either one is capable of claiming a starting job at linebacker.

All systems are "go" in the defensive secondary, where the Bengals have more nimble-fingered thieves than you're likely to find at Times Square on New Year's Eve. The leading exponent of that aerial thievery is cornerback Lemar Parrish, a ball-hawking veteran who hijacked three enemy passes in '77, including one that he ran back 47 yards for a touchdown.

Ten-year pro Ken Riley is set at the other corner, having added two aerial thefts and numerous pass deflections last season. The starting tandem of Parrish and Riley is one of the best in pro football, and there's good depth at cornerback as well, provided top reserve Melvin Morgan (suspended last season for punching out Pittsburgh's John Stallworth) confines himself to playing pass defense and leaves the fisticuffs to the Muhammed Alis of this world.

Heading up the last line of defense is strong safety Tommy Cassanova, a three-time Pro Bowl selection and one of the best around at his position. Marvin Cobb, a four-year pro, is stationed at free safety. Providing first-class depth at the safety spots is Jerry Anderson, a real "hitter" who could take over a starting job soon.

## Beat The Point Spread See Page 5

Some of the so-called experts scoffed when the Bengals used a No. 2 draft pick in '75 to select placekicker Chris Bahr. But he's more than paid off on that investment—like last season, when Bahr drilled 19 field goals and 25 of 26 PATs to rank third among AFC scorers with 82 points. Punting chores are handled by Pat McNally, also a wide receiver, and he finished second in the conference in '77 with a 41.8 yard average on 67 kicks.

**GAMEPLAN CONCLUSION:** We hate to keep harping on the point but the Bengals have an outstanding football team, yet one that has never quite managed to fulfill their potential and award former coach (and present General Manager) Paul Brown with his first Super Bowl team. Could this be the year that drought ends? Well, let it be known we look upon the Bengals as a Super Bowl contender. On offense, how can you down-play the dynamic potential of an attack built around the likes of Ken Anderson, Issac Curtis, Billy Brooks, Pete Johnson and Archie Griffin. The aerial attack is quite potent, but the rush-

ing game could use one "big" gun on the order of a Franco Harris or Greg Pruitt.

The offensive line is solid at the tackles but needs more stability up the middle, an area that will really be a headache if center Johnson retires. Overall, the Bengals have an outstanding defensive unit, one that is especially strong in the front four and the secondary. The reserve situation on defense is suspect in several areas, however, and a major injury epidemic would undermine their performance. It's year number three of the Tiger Johnson coaching era in Cincinnati, a tenure that so far has resulted in records of 10-4 and 8-6, no AFC Central titles and not a single playoff appearance. That's the kind of record not likely to find favor with GM Paul Brown too much longer. We look for the '78 edition of Bengals to make another determined bid to wrest the AFC Central crown away from the Pittsburgh Steelers. But that's not going to be an easy task even if the Steelers do have more internal problems than the cast of some afternoon soap opera. With the new NFL scheduling and playoff format (16 regular season games, two wild card teams from each conference) the Bengals still have a shot at landing a berth in the post-season festivities even if they can't cart off their division title. With their kind of talent, winning from 10 to 12 games this season is quite possible, and that kind of showing should earn them at least a wild card invite.

# Pittsburgh Steelers

(9-5-0)

Has the curtain, in this case a "steel" curtain, rung down on the championship era in Pittsburgh? Have Coach Chuck Noll's gridders, Super Bowl winners in 1975 and '76, gone from the days of wine-and-roses to the days of muscatel and stink weed? That's what some folks suspect after last season, when the once-mighty Steelers landed a playoff berth almost by default—thank you, Cincinnati Bengals—then took a 34-21 licking from the Denver Broncos in the very first round.

However, that's not the sentiment in this corner, because we still feel the Steelers have championship potential despite the trials and tribulations they went through in '77. Look at it this way. How many other NFL teams could endure holdouts by stars like Mel Blount and Jack Lambert, suffer through mid-season defections by Glen Edwards and Jimmy Allen, lose standouts L.C. Greenwood and Jon Kolb with injuries, yet still wind up in the playoffs like last year's Steelers? We rest our case!

Now, with a brand new NFL season just around the corner, the Steelers look ready to concentrate on business again, and that alone makes them a title threat in their own division (the AFC Central) and a Super Bowl candidate. But only if, and it's a big IF, they play with the tremendous intensity that made them the class team in the league just a few short years

### 1978 Schedule

Sep 3	at Buffalo
Sep 10	SEATTLE
Sep 17	at Cincinnati
Sep 24	CLEVELAND
Oct 1	at New York Jets
Oct 8	ATLANTA
Oct 15	at Cleveland
Oct 23	HOUSTON
Oct 29	KANSAS CITY
Nov 5	NEW ORLEANS
Nov 12	at Los Angeles
Nov 19	CINCINNATI
Nov 27	at San Francisco
Dec 3	at Houston
Dec 9	BALTIMORE
Dec 16	at Denver

ago.

**OFFENSE:** One guy the Steelers never have to worry about when it comes to giving 100% all the time is their veteran quarterback Terry Bradshaw. Last season, despite playing almost three-quarters of the campaign with his left arm in a cast as the result of a bone fracture, Bradshaw was on target with 162 of 314 aerial attempts, accounting for 2,523 yards and 17 touchdowns via the passing lanes.

Over the years, Bradshaw has demonstrated an uncanny ability to hang in there despite injury, which is almost a "must" when you consider his reckless playing style. In addition to that, Bradshaw is a rifle-armed passer and one

Steelers	1977 Results	Opp
27	San Francisco	0
7	Oakland	16
28	at Cleveland	14
10	at Houston	27
20	Cincinnati	14
27	Houston	10
21	at Baltimore	31
7	at Denver	21
35	Cleveland	31
28	Dallas	13
23	at N.Y. Jets	20
30	Seattle	20
10	at Cincinnati	17
10	at San Diego	9

of the most agile quarterbacks in the game when it comes to running with the pigskin.

Provided he's recovered from an injury that sidelined him most of the '77 season, the foremost reserve at quarterback will be Mike Kruczek. Latest reports indicate that Kruczek is operating at top form again, and his return is a real plus at the signal calling spot since he's got the ability to run the offense on a regular basis if needed.

Without question, when you talk about Pittsburgh's pass catching corps, the first guy you mention is Lynn Swann, a consensus All-Pro in '77 when he sprinted for 789 yards and seven touchdowns on 50 receptions. Swann is unequalled in all

of pro football when it comes to making sensational catches, and his gazelle-like leaping ability makes him almost impossible to stop even when he gets double coverage.

Sprinting out of the other wide receiving berth is John Stallworth, who had 44 receptions for 784 yards and seven TDs last season. Stallworth, a five-year pro, and running mate Swann are one of the fastest pair of wide receivers around, and they combine to give the Steelers an explosive 1-2 long distance punch.

The most seasoned reserve at wide receiver is former regular Frank Lewis, who was hampered by injuries in '77 but still managed 11 catches for 263 yards and one 65-yard touchdown reception. Also available is promising second-year pro Jim Smith, who averaged 20.0 yards on four catches in '77 and led the Steelers in both punt returns (36 for an 8.2 yard

average) and kickoff runbacks (16 for a 23.8 yard norm).

Thundering out of the tight end spot is 250-pounder Bennie Cunningham, who latched onto 20 aerials for 347 yards and two scores a year ago. Cunningham was the team's No. 1 pick in the '76 college draft, and if he continues to improve at his present rate, you'll hear a lot more about him in the future. Backing him up at tight end is steady five-year veteran Randy Grossman, who added five receptions in '77.

Just as Lynn Swann is the undisputed "main man" in Pittsburgh's pass receiving brigade, so is the rushing attack built around and powered by Franco Harris. Last season, for the fifth time in his pro career, Harris went over the 1,000-yard rushing mark when he bolted for 1,162 on 300 carries, and he blasted into enemy end zones 11 times. Along

#### Pittsburgh Steelers 1978 Veteran Roster

NO	NAME	POS	HT	WT	AGE	YR	COLLEGE	GAMES
								IN '77
45	Allen, Jim	CB-S	6-2	194	26	5	UCLA	12
76	Banaszak, John	DE	6-3	244	28	4	Eastern Michigan	8
65	Beasley, Tom	DT	6-5	253	24	1	Virginia Tech	0
83	Bell, Theo	WR	5-11	180	25	2	Arizona	0
20	Bleier, Rocky	RB	5-11	210	32	10	Notre Dame	13
47	Blount, Mel	CB	6-3	205	30	10	S'thern University	14
12	Bradshaw, Terry	QB	6-3	215	30	9	Louisiana Tech	14
79	Brown, Larry	OT	6-4	245	29	8	Kansas	14
50	Clack, Jim	G	6-3	250	31	8	Wake Forest	14
56	Cole, Robin	LB	6-2	220	23	2	New Mexico	8
77	Courson, Steve	G	6-1	260	23	1	South Carolina	0
60	Cousino, Brad	LB	6-0	216	25	4	Miami (Ohio)	3
89	Cunningham, Bennie	TE	6-5	247	24	3	Clemson	12
57	Davis, Sam	G	6-1	255	34	12	Allen University	11
35	Deloplain, Jack	RB	5-10	205	24	3	Salem (W. Va.)	8
21	Dungy, Tony	S	6-0	188	23	2	Minnesota	14
67	Dunn, Gary	DT	6-3	247	25	2	Miami (Fla.)	0
27	Edwards, Glen	S	6-0	185	31	8	Florida A&M	13
17	Engles, Rick	P	5-11	180	24	3	Tulsa	1
64	Furness, Steve	DT-DE	6-4	255	28	7	Rhode Island	14
36	Gaines, Wentford	S	6-0	185	25	1	Cincinnati	0
10	Gerela, Roy	K	5-10	185	30	10	New Mexico St.	14
16	Graff, Neil	QB	6-3	200	28	5	Wisconsin	4
75	Greene, Joe	DT	6-4	260	32	10	North Texas St.	13
68	Greenwood, L.C.	DE	6-6	250	32	10	Arkansas AM&N	9
84	Grossman, Randy	TE	6-1	215	26	5	Temple	13
59	Ham, Jack	LB	6-1	225	30	8	Penn State	14
32	Harris, Franco	RB	6-2	225	28	7	Penn State	14
46	Harrison, Reggie	RB	5-11	220	28	5	Cincinnati	14
63	Holmes, Ernie	DT	6-3	270	30	7	Texas Southern	13
55	Kolb, Jon	OT	6-2	262	31	10	Oklahoma State	13
15	Kruczek, Mike	QB	6-1	205	25	3	Boston College	2
54	LaCrosse, Dave	LB	6-3	210	23	2	Wake Forest	14
58	Lambert, Jack	LB	6-4	220	26	5	Kent State	11
43	Lewis, Frank	WR	6-1	196	31	8	Grambling State	10
28	Maxson, Alvin	RB	6-0	205	27	5	S'thern Methodist	7
72	Mullins, Gerry	G	6-3	244	29	8	S'thern California	12
66	Petersen, Ted	C-OT	6-5	244	23	2	Eastern Illinois	14
74	Pinney, Ray	OT-C	6-4	240	24	3	Washington	14
85	Pough, Ernie	WR	6-1	174	26	3	Texas Southern	14
29	Sexton, Brent	CB	6-1	190	25	2	Elon	11
31	Shell, Donnie	S	5-11	190	26	5	S. Carolina St.	12
86	Smith, Jim	WR	6-2	205	23	2	Michigan	14
37	Smith, Laverne	RB	5-10	193	24	2	Kansas	7
82	Stallworth, John	WR	6-2	183	26	5	Alabama A&M	14
18	Stoudt, Cliff	QB	6-4	218	23	2	Youngstown St.	0
88	Swann, Lynn	WR	6-0	180	26	5	S'thern Cal.	14
24	Thomas, J.T.	CB	6-2	196	27	6	Florida State	14
38	Thornton, Sidney	RB	5-11	230	24	2	Northwestern La.	13
51	Toews, Loren	LB	6-3	222	27	6	California	14
23	Wagner, Mike	S	6-1	200	30	8	Western Illinois	3
52	Webster, Mike	C	6-1	250	26	5	Wisconsin	14
78	White, Dwight	DE	6-4	255	29	8	East Texas State	14
53	Winston, Dennis	LB	6-0	228	23	2	Arkansas	13

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with Jim Brown and O.J. Simpson, Harris is only the third player in NFL history to go over the 6,000-yard mark in his first six pro seasons, and he's one of the most durable runners the league has ever seen.

Occupying the running back spot opposite him is 10-year veteran Rocky Bleier, who slashed for 465 yards on 135 attempts and scored four times in '77. Bleier's an unselfish player who blocks as well as any running back in the league, but he's also an accomplished ball carrier who can "burn" an opponent if they start to key on the team's big gun, Harris.

The reserve situation at running back is fair-to-middling, although it could improve with youngsters like Laverne Smith and Sidney Thornton on hand. Smith is a speedster who was having a great rookie season in '77 until an injury knocked him out of action, while the stocky Thornton (5-11, 230) is a blockbuster who smashed for 103 yards and scored twice last season in brief appearances. Veteran ball carriers available include Reggie Harrison and Jack Deloplaine, although the latter was idled most of the '77 campaign by an injury.

In the offensive line, the Steelers have a handful of solid but often underrated blockers, led by the aforementioned Jon Kolb, one of the game's premier tackles. Kolb spent the large part of last year on the sidelines with an injury, but now that he's back in harness, he'll re-establish himself as the wheelhorse up front.

Opposite him is eight-year veteran Larry Brown, who made the conversion from tight end to tackle last year and impressed us with his steady play at his new position. Supplying depth at tackle is the versatile duo of Gerry Mullins and Ray Pinney, who can also help out at guard and center, respectively.

Snapping the ball is Mike Webster, a sturdy five-year pro who's found a home at center after alternating between the pivot spot and a guard position early in his career. Flanking him at the guard holes are Jim Clack and Sam Davis, a reliable tandem that excels at pulling out on sweeps.

**DEFENSE:** Remember that old Broadway hit tune that went: "Well, we got trouble... trouble with a capital T." That's about the best way to describe the defensive situation in Pittsburgh last season, with all the walkouts, holdouts, morale problems and the like. Yet through it all, the Steelers hung in there pretty well, and prospects for this year can only be that much brighter now that things have settled down a bit.

In the front wall, the fabled "Steel Curtain" is showing signs of weakening a bit, although a return to full health by All-Pro end L.C. Greenwood sure would improve the situation. Hobbled by a bad knee most of the '77 season, Greenwood was but a shadow of his former self, and only time will tell if he can re-claim his old form this year.

Firing in from the opposite line flank is the guy the Steelers call "Mad Dog," 255-pound Dwight White. White finished second on the team in sacks last season with 6½, well below his usual average, but he'd greatly benefit if his old running mate at the other flank, Greenwood, were to return and take some of the double-

1977 LEADERS					
PASS	A/C	INT	YDS	TD	
Bradshaw	314/162	19	2523	17	
Graft	12/6	0	47	0	
REC	NO	YDS	AVG	TD	
Swann	50	789	15.8	7	
Stallworth	44	784	17.8	7	
INT	NO	YDS	AVG	TD	
Blount	6	65	10.8	0	
Allen	5	76	15.2	0	
RUSH	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD	
Harris	300	1162	3.9	11	
Bleier	135	465	3.4	4	
PUNT	NO	YDS	AVG	BK	
Walden	67	2482	37.0	5	
Engles	5	169	33.8	0	
SCORE	TD	EP/MA	FG/MA	PTS	
Harris	11	0/0	0/0	66	
Gerela	0	34/37	9/14	61	

team blocking pressure off. Also returning from the injured list is the foremost reserve at defensive end, John Banaszak, and he will add some badly needed quality depth.

Inside at the tackle berths, one spot is manned by unheralded Steve Furness, who led the team last season with 8½ quarterback sacks and was the top tackler among the down linemen with 87 stops. However, Furness will have to stay on his toes if he wants to keep his starting job, because lurking in the background is former regular Ernie Holmes, who added 4½ sacks in '77.

At the other tackle is Joe Greene, a guy who for years got very upset when folks called him "Mean Joe." But after last year, when Greene threatened to "maim" game officials because of their supposed bad calls and then punched Denver's Paul Howard in an AFC playoff game, you have to wonder if the nickname doesn't fit. Greene, a many times All-Pro, did not have a good season in '77, but if he can confine himself to just playing the game and leave that other stuff alone, he could return to his old form and bulwark the team's front four.

Backing up the middle of the line is rugged Jack Lambert, and despite his early holdout plus nagging injuries last season, he led the team in tackles with 125 and was named to the Pro Bowl. Lambert

1977 Regular Season Statistics		
	STEELERS	OPP
FIRST DOWNS	266	228
NET RUSH	2258	1723
Avg Per Game	161.3	123.1
NET PASS	2387	1969
Att/Comp	341/173	358/157
Had Int	21	31
Avg Per Game	170.5	140.6
PUNTS/AVG	73/36.3	79/40.3
Punts Return/Yds	46/389	34/380
Avg Per Return	8.5	11.2
KICKOFF-RET/YDS	45/990	48/1080
Avg Per Return	22.0	22.5
FUMBLES/LOST	41/28	28/13
FIELD GOALS	9/14	14/21
PATS	34/37	27/29
TOTAL POINTS	283	243

is one of the hardest hitting, hardest playing guys in the NFL, and there probably isn't a better man in the league at his respective position.

Blasting enemy running backs from the strong side linebacking spot is perennial All-Pro Jack Ham, second in tackles last season (95) and third in pass interceptions with four. Many of the things that are said about his 'backer mate, Lambert, also apply to Ham.

Stationed at the other outside linebacking berth is six-year veteran Loren Toews, although he may have trouble hanging onto his starting job with Robin Cole back on the scene. Cole, the team's No. 1 pick in last year's college draft, looked like a sure-fire regular in his rookie season until he went down with an arm injury. Another young 'backer with good potential is Dennis Winston, who filled in and played extremely well in '77 when Jack Lambert was out.

Despite the holdout of Mel Blount, the defections of Glen Edwards and Jim Allen, as well as an injury that knocked Mike Wagner out for the entire season, the Steelers secondary did another bang-up job in '77. Stationed at one cornerback position is Blount, who led the team a year ago with six pass interceptions. Blount is one of the finest corners in the league, equally adept at stopping the run and the pass, and the Steelers aren't

### Pittsburgh Steelers Rookie Roster

(Listed in order of selection)

NAME	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
Johnson, Ron	DB	6-0	170	Eastern Michigan
Fry, Willie	DE	6-3	226	Notre Dame
Colquitt, Craig	P	6-0	189	Tennessee
Anderson, Larry	DB	6-0	172	Louisiana Tech
Reutershan, Randy	WR	5-10	185	Pittsburgh
Dufresne, Mike	TE	6-4	235	Nebraska
Moser, Rich	RB	6-1	200	Rhode Island
Keys, Andre	WR	5-10	185	Cal Poly-Obispo
Reynolds, Lance	T	6-3	240	Brigham Young
Becker, Doug	LB	6-0	220	Notre Dame
Jurich, Tom	K	6-0	181	Northern Arizona
Terry, Nat	DB	6-0	160	Florida State
Brzoza, Tom	C	6-3	240	Pittsburgh
Carr, Brad	LB	6-1	205	Maryland

about to let him go even if he and Coach Noll don't see eye-to-eye on certain subjects.

Stationed at the opposite corner is steady six-year pro J.T. Thomas, who added two pass thefts in '77. Supplying depth at cornerback is the previously mentioned Jim Allen, second on the team in interceptions a year ago with five.

At free safety is Glen Edwards, but after his run-ins with Coach Noll and the team's front office a year ago, it's probable that he'll be traded to another team before this season gets underway. The most likely candidates to fill his berth should that occur are second-year pro Tony Dungy, a college quarterback (Minnesota) who signed on as a free agent in '77, or Donnie Shell, who was the starting strong safety last season. However, Shell won't be able to switch positions unless Mike Wagner, a long-time standout on the strong side, is fully recovered from an injury that sidelined him all of last year.

Ten-year veteran Roy Gerela handles the placekicking for the Steelers, but he could be in danger of losing that job after a disappointing '77 season which saw him total only 61 points on 34 of 37 extra point conversions and 9 of 14 field goals. The same situation faces punter Bobby Walden, who averaged just 37.0 yards a boot last season and had five of his kicks blocked.

*The Steelers made a rather unusual (at least for them) off-season trade when they dealt OG/OC Jim Clack and WR/KR Ernie Pough to the NY Giants for OG John Hicks. Hicks was a "bust" with the Giants where he was never really happy playing, but the change of scenery to the Steel City could result in his claiming a regular job in the Steelers' offensive line.*

**GAMEPLAN CONCLUSION:** Coach Chuck Noll must have felt like heaving a huge sigh of relief at the end of last season because he went through the kind of year only a masochist would have enjoyed. Holdouts, walkouts, injuries, internal strife—the Steelers had it all in '77, and still they managed to win the AFC Central title again. Although, it should be noted, they won that championship only through the grace of God in the form of Cincinnati's upset loss to Houston in the year's final game. So, after all that, Coach Noll is bound to enjoy the upcoming NFL season a lot more, and so will the Pittsburgh players if they can re-discover that something extra that made them Super Bowl winners two years in a row. On offense, the Steelers boast a wealth of outstanding personnel. All-Pro's like Swann and Harris, as well as steady performers like Bradshaw, Stallworth and Kolb, the latter fully recovered from his incapacitating injury of a year ago. Add it all up and it spells an explosive attack for the Steel City gridders, a balanced offense capable of putting points on the board by land, sea or through the air. Over on defense, however, there are several trouble spots, starting right in the front wall where the "Steel Curtain" is showing definite signs of wear and tear. Now, if linemen like Greenwood and Banaszak can stay healthy, and others like Holmes can play

with consistency, the front wall will be mighty tough to dent and their pass rush will scare the hell out of enemy quarterbacks. But we have to think that, realistically, the time for rebuilding is at hand in the defensive line, a task that won't be easy no matter how the Steelers go about it. The linebacking crew is first-class all the way and should be even better with added experience for relative youngsters like Toews, Winston and Cole. In the secondary, there's likely to be a change or two made this season, but this is still an outstanding bunch and one that is young enough to continue their banner play for a few more years yet. Label the Steelers a question mark as they enter the '78 pro

football season; a team with great potential, but one that will have to forget outside problems and concentrate on the business at hand. Given a steady and trouble-free performance from all the players, Pittsburgh has the ability to extend their title reign in the AFC Central this year, thus landing another berth in the championship playoffs. The Steelers found out in '77 that the going gets a little tougher for them all the time, and we can't honestly see them presenting more than a token challenge to clubs like Oakland, Baltimore and New England in the race for this year's American Conference title and a berth in the next Super Bowl.

## Houston Oilers

### 1978 Schedule

Sep 3	at Atlanta
Sep 10	at Kansas City
Sep 17	SAN FRANCISCO
Sep 24	LOS ANGELES
Oct 1	at Cleveland
Oct 8	at Oakland
Oct 15	BUFFALO
Oct 23	at Pittsburgh
Oct 29	at Cincinnati
Nov 5	CLEVELAND
Nov 12	at New England
Nov 20	MIAMI
Nov 26	CINCINNATI
Dec 3	PITTSBURGH
Dec 10	at New Orleans
Dec 17	SAN DIEGO

(8-6-0)

There's a rumor that Houston Coach O. A. "Bum" Phillips would like to take all the so-called "experts" who picked his team to finish last in the AFC Central a year ago, tie them to the nearest oil derrick, then wait for the next gusher to come in! And we can't say we blame him, since the underrated Oilers finished a close second in their division in '77, coming within just nine points (the margin of difference in losses to Cleveland, Cincinnati and Oakland) of landing a playoff berth.

Much to our chagrin, GAMEPLAN was one of the forecasters guilty of underestimating last year's Oilers,

Oilers	1977 Results	Opp
20	N.Y. Jets	0
16	at Green Bay	10
7	at Miami	27
27	Pittsburgh	10
23	Cleveland	24
10	at Pittsburgh	27
10	at Cincinnati	13
47	Chicago	0
29	at Oakland	34
22	at Seattle	10
34	Kansas City	20
14	Denver	24
19	at Cleveland	15
21	Cincinnati	16

although surely we weren't the only ones who made that blunder. But, heck, how could anyone have known that a rejuvenated offense and a defensive unit tougher to dent than the Berlin Wall would make the Oilers that much stronger almost overnight!

However, we aren't about to make the same mistake twice. This season, we're tabbing Coach Phillips' team as a bonafide title contender in the AFC Central. And that's nothing to sneeze at when you consider their inter-division rivals include Pittsburgh, Cincinnati and a Cleveland team that looks stronger under rookie Coach Sam Rutigliano.

### Houston Oilers Rookie Roster

(Listed in order of selection)

NAME	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
Campbell, Earl	RB	6-1	231	Texas
Nielsen, Gifford	QB	6-5	195	Brigham Young
Renfro, Mike	WR	6-0	180	Texas Christian
Rucker, Conrad	TE	6-3	210	Southern U
Wilson, J.C.	DB	6-0	172	Pittsburgh
Mol, Jim	DE	6-3	235	Morningside
Young, Steve	TE	6-4	215	Wake Forest
Thicklen, Willie	WR	6-2	200	Alabama St.
Schuhmacher, John	G	6-5	265	Southern Cal.





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Game outlook: analysis of each team's strengths and weaknesses, and prediction of the completion and outcome of game

## MATCHUPS - ROSTERS - STATISTICS - PAST RESULTS - ANALYSIS

HOUSTON OILERS		PITTSBURGH STEELERS	
D.A. PHILIPS Power Rating: 121		CHUCK NOLL Power Rating: 129	
Alexander Atkins Benne Bingham Burrough Clemens Culp Drumgo Fabelo Harden Hoaglin Hunt Kiner Mauck Parks	Ch. Roberts T. Edwards S. Sawyer LB Stamnick WR Whittington MG Wright C. Benson RB Beverly C. Brazier T. Butler LB Corney C. Dickey	Biever Brady Brown D Clack Clay Futura Garrett Graham Green Grossman Harrison Kellum Lambert Mansfield	RB Adams LB Shell Clack G.C. Toews WR White WR Baranek LB Blount OT Bradshaw RB Brown QB Collier RB Edwards LB Furness LB Garcia K. Gravelle

Capsule Summary - Previous Games		Capsule Summary - Previous Games	
HOUSTON GAME No. 1 September 7 Houston 7, New England 0-0 1st Downs 7 Rush yd 33-116 Pass yd 52 Punts 28 Fumbles 16-11 Pen yd 5-37		PITTSBURGH GAME No. 1 September 7 Pittsburgh 10, San Diego 0-0 1st Downs 24 Rush yd 45-205 Pass yd 105 Punts 22-90 Fumbles 4-2 Pen yd 4-31	

QUARTERBACK		QUARTERBACK	
Passes Attempted Completions Completion Percentage Touchdowns Interceptions Avg Gain Per Pass		Passes Attempted Completions Completion Percentage Touchdowns Interceptions Avg Gain Per Pass	

OFFENSE		OFFENSE	
Rush Avg Per Game Pass Avg Per Game First Downs Rushing First Downs Passing Total Yards Rushing Total Yards Passing Total Penalty Yards		Rush Avg Per Game Pass Avg Per Game First Downs Rushing First Downs Passing Total Yards Rushing Total Yards Passing Total Penalty Yards	

DEFENSE		DEFENSE	
Opp Avg Rush per Game Opp Avg Pass per Game Opp Rushes Avg Yards Opp Pass Compl Perc Opp First Downs Rush Opp First Downs Pass Total Opp First Downs Total Opp Yds Allowed Per Game		Opp Avg Rush per Game Opp Avg Pass per Game Opp Rushes Avg Yards Opp Pass Compl Perc Opp First Downs Rush Opp First Downs Pass Total Opp First Downs Total Opp Yds Allowed Per Game	

KICK-OFFS		KICK-OFFS	
Avg Kickoff Return Opp Avg Kickoff Return Kickoff Ret for TD		Avg Kickoff Return Opp Avg Kickoff Return Kickoff Ret for TD	

PUNTS		PUNTS	
Avg Yards Per Punt Opp Avg Yards Per Punt Opp Punt Return Opp Punt Return		Avg Yards Per Punt Opp Avg Yards Per Punt Opp Punt Return Opp Punt Return	

FIELD GOALS		FIELD GOALS	
Field Goals Attempted Field Goals Made Field Goal Percentage		Field Goals Attempted Field Goals Made Field Goal Percentage	

FUMBLES		FUMBLES	
Fumbles Lost Opp Fumbles Lost Opp Fumbles Lost		Fumbles Lost Opp Fumbles Lost Opp Fumbles Lost	

TOUCHDOWNS		TOUCHDOWNS	
Touchdowns Rushing Touchdowns Passing Opp TD's Rushing Opp TD's Passing Other Touchdowns Total Touchdowns		Touchdowns Rushing Touchdowns Passing Opp TD's Rushing Opp TD's Passing Other Touchdowns Total Touchdowns	

POINTS		POINTS	
Total Points Scored Total Points Allowed		Total Points Scored Total Points Allowed	

## College Matchups

HOUSTON (26-24-1)		HOUSTON (26-24)	
Power Rating: 115		Power Rating: 100	
44-11-1	CHUCK NOLL	04-11-1	CHUCK NOLL
1st Downs 11	11-0-0	1st Downs 11	11-0-0
Rush yd 11	11-0-0	Rush yd 11	11-0-0
Pass yd 11	11-0-0	Pass yd 11	11-0-0
Punts 11	11-0-0	Punts 11	11-0-0
Fumbles 11	11-0-0	Fumbles 11	11-0-0
Pen yd 11	11-0-0	Pen yd 11	11-0-0

Game No. 1  
they marched up the game as close as it. The game by QB Davis was up 4.8 yards on ground offense are big help too.

Game No. 2  
in St. right now. "Un-

Game No. 3  
Steele scored four of first five times they had ball and enjoyed 2nd straight opening drive without 37-0 Bradshaw hit 75% passing to nine different receivers and Harris laid over 200 yds for well balanced offense.

Game No. 4  
Steele scored 227 yds rushing and Steeler offense had five costly turnovers as Pitt lost 30-21. Bills' first two scores came on Bradshaw Backup QB Gilliam brought Steelers back late but not enough.

Game No. 5  
Steele got 2nd straight win in last best game there in 25 years, beating Browns 42-6. Team game record by capturing 78.3% of passes as offense surpassed 500-yard mark for first time under Noll.

Game No. 6  
On strength of two sensational end zone receptions by Lynn Swann, Steelers beat Denver 20-9. Pitt was able to sit on it. Armstrong and Paul Simon. Four turnovers destroyed what was offense Broncos had.

Game No. 7  
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Game No. 83  
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Game No. 84  
Steele scored 227 yds rushing and Steeler offense had five costly turnovers as Pitt lost 30-21. Bills' first two scores came on Bradshaw Backup QB Gilliam brought Steelers back late but not enough.

Game No. 85  
Steele got 2nd straight win in last best game there in 25 years, beating Browns 42-6. Team game record



But the youth-oriented Oilers—who had as many as 17 rookies on their roster at one time or another last season—have the manpower to stand up to those rugged foes. This new-look Houston team “Bum” Phillips is guiding has forsaken its old image as a “big play” team for a steadier mode of operation. And the skipper notes: “Now, we’re able to take the ball in poor field position and still do something with it.”

**OFFENSE:** One player who can still put six quick ones on the board from anywhere on the field is quarterback Dan Pastorini, maturing into a fully capable pro signal caller—just what’s needed for a team with championship aspirations. A year ago, Pastorini found the mark on 169 of 318 aeriels, with 13 going for touchdowns, including an 85-yard bomb to Ken Burrough and a 71-yard scoring strike to Billy Johnson.

Alas, Pastorini is a free agent and subject to signing with another team if push comes to shove. Although we think Dante has finally found himself a home in Houston and will stay with the Oilers. At least, that’s what the team fervently hopes, because if he goes elsewhere the quarterbacking would be turned over to either John Hadl or Tommy Duniven. And this would put the offense in dire straits.

The previously mentioned Ken (Double-Zero) Burrough rockets out of one wide receiving berth, having dashed for 816 yards and eight TDs on 43 catches last season. And how’s this for an interesting statistic? In his nine pro seasons, Burrough has caught a total of 32 scoring aeriels which have averaged out to 52-yards per touchdown catch. Now, that’s what you call a “long distance” threat!

At the other wide receiver is Billy “White Shoes” Johnson, but to say he’s “just a wide receiver” is like saying all Superman can do is jump over tall buildings. Last season as a pass catcher, “White Shoes” averaged 20.6 yards on 20 receptions (three TD aeriels), returned punts for a 15.4 yard norm (two scoring runbacks) and notched 24.2 yards on kickoff returns (one for a touchdown). Oh, and as a clincher, Johnson also scored once on a 61-yard end-around run in ’77.

Reserve wide receiver Eddie Foster, who zipped under 15 aeriels last season, is a quality back-up. But after that, there’s only aging veteran Gary Garrison and untested Warren Anderson.

Mike Barber and Jimmy Giles, both second-year pros, share tight end duties. However, thus far neither has produced consistently as pass catchers or blockers. The Oilers may go shopping for some fresh talent unless things improve quickly at tight end.

For years, the Oilers’ biggest offensive handicap was a lackluster rushing attack. But now the ground game more than holds up its end of the attack. Pacing the overland onslaught is Ronnie Coleman who, in addition to being a punishing blocker, rushed for a team-high 660 yards and caught 22 passes last season, accounting for six touchdowns.

Number two bucko in the rushing attack is 215-pound bulldozer Rod Carpenter, a consensus all-rookie pick in ’77 when he butted for 652 yards. Car-

penter’s low center-of-gravity makes him tough to stop when he slashes through the middle. Only one other NFL player (Tony Dorsett of Dallas) gained more rushing yardage as a rookie last year.

Supplying depth at running back are a couple of other “big backs”—Don Hardeman and Tim Wilson—who powered for an aggregate 495 yards in ’77. Also counted on for ball-toting assistance are Fred Willis and John Housman, both on injured reserve last year along with Mike Voight.

The offensive line underwent a lot of changes last season and, since the end result was so successful, the same set-up will go again this time around. Always

reliable and usually underrated, Carl Mauck pivots the front wall, with back-up support from David Carter and Ted Hand, the latter injured all last year.

Another ’77 all-rookie selection, George Reihner, mans one guard hole, while opposite him is 10-year war horse Elbert Drungo. Ed Fisher is the foremost reserve at guard, although back from the ’77 injured reserve list is Bob Simon. The stout pass-blocking of tackles Greg Sampson and Kevin Hunt deserves a lot of credit for the offense’s explosive aerial attack, while backing them up are Morris Towns (injured last season) and Conway Hayman.

**DEFENSE:** Is the Houston defense

#### Houston Oiler 1978 Veteran Roster

NO	NAME	POS	HT	WT	AGE	YR	COLLEGE	GAMES	
								IN	’77
19	Alexander, Willie	CB	6-3	195	27	8	Alcorn U	14	
83	Anderson, Warren	WR	6-2	195	23	2	W Virginia St	8	
86	Barber, Mike	TE	6-3	235	25	2	Louisiana Tech	13	
63	Baumgartner, Steve	DE	6-7	275	27	5	Purdue	6	
65	Bethea, Elvin	DE	6-2	255	32	11	N Carolina A&T	9	
54	Bingham, Gregg	MLB	6-1	230	27	6	Purdue	14	
52	Brazile, Robert	OLB	6-4	238	25	4	Jackson St	14	
—	Burrough, Ken	WR	6-3	210	30	9	Texas So	14	
26	Carpenter, Rob	RB	6-1	214	23	2	Miami (O)	11	
58	Carter, David	C	6-2	225	25	2	W Kentucky	14	
47	Coleman, Ronnie	RB	5-11	198	27	5	Alabama A&M	14	
78	Culp, Curley	MG	6-1	265	32	11	Arizona St	14	
20	Currier, Bill	DB	6-0	190	23	2	S Carolina	14	
67	Dean, Jimmy	DE	6-4	252	23	1	Texas A&M	0	
23	Dempsey, Tom	K	6-1	260	31	9	Palomar JC	5	
69	Dorris, Andy	DE	6-4	240	27	6	New Mexico St	5	
75	Drungo, Elbert	G	6-5	265	35	10	Tennessee St	14	
11	Duniven, Tom	QB	6-3	210	24	2	Texas Tech	1	
60	Fisher, Ed	G-C	6-3	250	29	5	Arizona St	14	
89	Foster, Eddie	WB	5-10	185	24	2	Houston	14	
16	Fritsch, Toni	K	5-7	195	33	7	None	8	
82	Garrison, Gary	WR	6-1	194	34	13	S Diego St	2	
88	Giles, Jimmy	TE	6-3	225	24	2	Alcorn U	14	
66	Hand, Ted	C	6-2	250	27	1	E Michigan	0	
30	Hardeman, Don	RB	6-2	235	26	4	Texas A&I	12	
70	Hayman, Conway	T	6-3	260	29	5	Delaware	13	
40	Housman, John	RB	6-3	208	24	1	Houston	0	
48	Hull, Harvey	LB	6-2	230	23	1	Mississippi St	0	
72	Hunt, Kevin	T	6-5	260	30	8	Doane (Neb)	14	
15	Johnson, Al	DB	6-0	200	28	7	Cincinnati	14	
84	Johnson, Billy	WR	5-9	170	26	5	Widener	14	
71	Kennard, Ken	MG	6-2	245	24	2	Angelo St	14	
79	Kirk, Ernest	DE	6-2	265	26	2	Howard Payne	14	
57	Kiner, Steve	MLB	6-1	225	31	8	Tennessee	14	
25	Knoff, Kurt	DB	6-2	188	24	3	Kansas	3	
64	Knox, Ernest	DE	6-2	245	26	2	SMU	0	
—	Lee, Ernest	DE	6-3	260	22	1	Texas	0	
55	Mauck, Carl	C	6-4	250	31	10	S Illinois	14	
22	Moore, Zeke	CB	6-3	195	35	12	Lincoln	14	
18	Parsley, Cliff	P	6-1	211	24	2	Oklahoma St	14	
7	Pastorini, Dan	QB	6-3	205	29	8	Santa Clara	14	
64	Reihner, George	G	6-4	263	23	2	Penn State	13	
37	Reinfeldt, Mike	DB	6-2	195	25	3	Wisconsin	14	
73	Sampson, Greg	T	6-6	270	28	7	Stanford	14	
74	Simon, Bobby	T-G	6-3	252	26	3	Grambling	0	
29	Sowells, Rich	DB	6-0	185	30	8	Alcorn St	10	
27	Stemrick, Greg	CB	5-11	185	27	4	Colorado St	9	
53	Stringer, Art	ILB	6-1	223	24	2	Ball State	14	
51	Thompson, Ted	OLB	6-1	220	25	4	SMU	14	
76	Towns, Morris	T	6-4	275	24	1	Missouri	14	
31	Voight, Mike	RB	6-0	214	24	2	N Carolina	14	
59	Washington, Ted	OLB	6-1	245	30	6	Miss Valley	14	
28	Weger, Mike	DB	6-2	200	33	11	Bowling Green	11	
44	Willis, Greg	RB	6-0	205	31	8	Boston Coll	0	
38	Whittington, C. L.	DB	6-1	200	26	5	Prairie View	0	
45	Wilson, Tim	RB	6-3	220	24	2	Maryland	10	
24	Woolford, Gary	CB	6-0	178	24	1	Florida St	0	
77	Young, James	DE	6-2	260	28	2	Texas So	13	

stingy? Was Jack Benny a tight-wad? Twice last season, the Oilers' vaunted 3-4 defensive unit registered shutouts, and in six other games opponents were held to a single touchdown. Even the late Mr. Benny would call that stingy!

In the three-man defensive line, one flank is protected by perennial all-star Elvin Bethea, who missed the last five games of '77 with an injury but is now fully recovered. With a completely healthy Mr. Bethea roaring in on the pass rush, enemy quarterbacks better hope their insurance premiums are paid up.

At the opposite flank is James Young, not a name that will ring a bell with many fans, yet he led the Oilers last season with 7½ quarterback sacks. The most amazing thing is that before joining the Oilers, Young was a member of the Houston Fire Department. Only now, he puts out the fires in enemy passing attacks!

Depth at the flank positions is headed by Steve Baumgartner and Andy Dorris, both ex-New Orleans Saints. The reserve picture would be clearer if Jimmy Dean and Ernest Knox, both out last season, can make complete recoveries.

The man-in-the-middle for the Oilers up front—figuratively, literally and otherwise—is Pro Bowler Curly Culp, an 11-year veteran who makes it all happen. He reacts well, shuts off the middle like a Rock of Gibraltar, pursues to the outside and rushes enemy passers like the dickens. In essence, he's the ultimate middle guard in this league or any other. Supplying depth in the middle is Ken Kennard, promising but inexperienced.

Any mention of the four-man linebacking corps has to begin with the starting outside 'backers, Robert Brazile and Ted Washington, who teamed up on (get this!) 313 total tackles last season. Brazile also finished second in quarterback sacks (5) and Washington led the team in forced fumbles (4) in '77. It's a shame the all star voters seldom pick two players from the same team who play the same position, because both are deserving.

That's not to say the inside linebackers are slouches, of course, because Greg Bingham and Steve Kiner can hit with the best of 'em. However, and we know we've brought this same subject up with other teams that use the 3-4 defense, you must have quality reserve strength at linebacker. What the Oilers have to offer—Art Stringer, Ted Thompson and Harvey Hull—doesn't exactly relieve our concern.

Well, now, hold on a minute, *not all* areas of the defense are that well-set. Because there's also the secondary. The Oilers try to fool you by saying only one other NFL team (the Pittsburgh Steelers with 31) had more interceptions than Houston, but that's a mis-leading statistic. Because opponents know the best way to score quick against the Oilers is to throw and throw again, and the plain old law-of-averages allows the team's defensive backs to come up with some thefts because they get thrown at so often.

The cornerbacks are Zeke Moore, who returned an intercepted pass 95-yards for a score last season, and Willie Alexander. Complementing them as reserves are Greg Sternick, Gary Woolford and Rich

1977 LEADERS				
PASS	A/C	INT	YDS	TD
Pastorini	318/169	18	1969	13
Hadl	24/11	3	76	0
REC	NO	YDS	AVG	TD
Burrough	43	816	19.0	8
Carpenter	23	156	7.1	0
INT	NO	YDS	AVG	TD
Reinfeldt	5	78	15.6	0
Brazile	3	40	13.3	0
RUSH	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
Coleman	185	660	3.4	5
Carpenter	144	652	4.5	1
PUNT	NO	YDS	AVG	BK
Parsley	77	3030	39.3	9
SCORE	TD	EP/MA	FG/MA	PTS
Fritsch	0	19/20	12/16	55
Burrough	8	O/O	O/O	48

Sowells, a line-up that immediately suggests the Oilers need some change at the cornerbacks.

Bill Currier (strong) and Mike Reinfeldt (free) are the starting safeties, although Reinfeldt may lose his starting

1977 Regular Season Statistics		
	OILERS	OPP
FIRST DOWNS	226	246
NET RUSH	1998	1802
Avg Per Game	142.7	128.7
NET PASS	1875	2142
Att/Comp	347/181	379/192
Had Int	21	26
Avg Per Game	134.0	153.0
PUNTS/AVG	77/39.3	79/39.8
Punts Return/Yds	36/539	46/340
Avg Per Return	15.0	7.4
KICKOFF-RET/YDS	46/1056	63/1331
Avg Per Return	22.5	21.1
FUMBLES/LOST	30/17	39/28
FIELD GOALS	16/25	16/22
PATS	29/34	24/26
TOTAL POINTS	299	230

assignment to C.L. Whittington, an ex-regular sidelined with an injury last season. Mike Weger, Al Johnson and Kurt Knoff are the most respected safety reserves.

The kicking game is still in a state of

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flux, with Toni Fritsch and Tom Dempsey still competing for the place kicking job. Cliff Parsley, who notched a 39.3 yard average on 77 punts last season, is a little more secure, but not unless he improves his kicking accuracy.

**GAMEPLAN CONCLUSION:** Okay, we admit it. We just plain old underestimated "Bum's" boys last season. But goodness, what a complete turnabout by this team in one short year! From 5-9 in '76 to 8-6 in '77, enough of an improvement to satisfy Phillips—at least for last season. This time out, it's up to the

top, the AFC Central throne, for the Oilers, and don't make any bets it can't happen. On offense alone, the individual talent is awesome, enough so to make the "country cousins" down in Dallas a little bit nervous. Provided Pastorini sticks around—and latest reports indicate that's so—the Oiler offense will hurt opponents about every way possible. Pass or run, it all adds up to six points, and we think the Oilers will put a lot of them on the board this season. The defense is almost as strong—and we say *almost*—because the secondary really needs to improve. The three-man front wall and linebacking

crew are solid, so long as injuries don't flare up. But the secondary needs immediate help, and this is probably the one area separating the Oilers from having just a good defense and one that can take the team all the way. Hey, no matter how much you may deny it, football championships are won with great defensive units, and we honestly question if the Oilers have that kind of defense at present. Call it another winning record for the '78 Oilers, but we honestly can't see how—even with their gosh-awful exciting offense—they can nose ahead of either Cincinnati or Pittsburgh.

# Cleveland Browns

(6-8-0)

Rutigliano's the name. Sam Rutigliano, selected as Cleveland's new skipper when Forrest Gregg was fired . . . er, when he was "asked to resign" at the end of last season. And while Rutigliano may not be all that well-known in Cleveland right now, he'll be the toast of the town if he can straighten out the Browns, who were wracked by internal problems a year ago when they lost six of their last seven games and plunged into the AFC Central basement.

The cause of those "internal problems" was a running dispute between ex-coach Gregg and some of the Cleveland players, a touchy situation that disrupted the team's harmony and contributed to the late season collapse. But just as much at fault were injuries—especially the one sustained by quarterback Brian Sipe—and that's the primary reason the undermanned Browns ran out of gas down the backstretch in '77.

New head coach Rutigliano brings with him an extensive background as an assistant with New Orleans, the NY Jets, New England and Denver the last 10 years. And since most of his apprenticeship was served as an offensive aide, Rutigliano's ideally suited to repair the Browns where they need it most—on the attack.

**OFFENSE:** The No. 1 goal will be to stabilize the quarterbacking situation. A giant step in the right direction would be the healthy return of Brian Sipe. Last season, before he was sidelined with a shoulder injury in the ninth game of the campaign, Sipe hit on 112 of 195 passes (57.4%), accumulating 1,233 yards and nine touchdowns via the air lanes.

Latest reports indicate Sipe is completely mended, and that should enable him to re-claim the starting job at quarterback. As far as sheer physical ability is concerned, Sipe is not the most gifted signal caller in the league, but he gets the maximum out of his talent and has excellent leadership qualities.

Supplying depth at quarterback are David Mays and Terry Luck, both of whom were found wanting in '77 when they got their chance to start following Sipe's injury. Mays was the more impressive of the two last season, when he passed for 797 yards and six TDs. He could develop into a competent signal

1978 Schedule		
Sep 3	SAN FRANCISCO	
Sep 10	CINCINNATI	
Sep 17	at Atlanta	
Sep 24	at Pittsburgh	
Oct 1	HOUSTON	
Oct 8	at New Orleans	
Oct 15	PITTSBURGH	
Oct 22	at Kansas City	
Oct 29	BUFFALO	
Nov 5	at Houston	
Nov 12	DENVER	
Nov 19	at Baltimore	
Nov 26	LOS ANGELES	
Dec 3	at Seattle	
Dec 10	NEW YORK JETS	
Dec 17	at Cincinnati	

caller once he starts playing with consistency.

The pass receiving corps, not overly deep to begin with, was depleted even more when Paul Warfield retired at the conclusion of the '77 campaign. The heir apparent to his old wide receiving berth is third-year pro Dave Logan, who snared 19 aeriels for 284 yards last season. Logan's a real bruiser compared to most wide receivers at 6-4 and 225, and his combination size and great faking ability should make him a solid pass catcher.

Sailing out of the opposite wide receiv-

Browns	1977 Results	Opp
13	at Cincinnati	3
30	New England	27
14	Pittsburgh	28
10	Oakland	26
24	at Houston	23
27	at Buffalo	16
44	Kansas City	7
7	Cincinnati	10
31	at Pittsburgh	35
21	at N.Y. Giants	7
0	Los Angeles	9
14	at San Diego	37
15	Houston	19
19	at Seattle	20

ing slot is veteran Reggie Rucker, who romped for 565 yards and two touchdowns on 36 catches a year ago. Last season was Rucker's poorest since coming to the Browns in a '75 trade with the New England Patriots, but since new skipper Rutigliano favors a strong aerial game, Reggie should re-assert himself as one of the AFC's best deep threats.

Set at the tight end position is Gary Parris, who galloped under 21 passes last season, which he carted for 213 yards and a team-leading five touchdowns. However, Parris must fend off the challenge

## Cleveland Browns Rookie Roster

(Listed in order of selection)

NAME	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
Matthews, Clay	LB	6-1	226	Southern Cal.
Newsome, Ozzie	WR	6-4	190	Alabama
Evans, Johnny	P-QB	6-2	200	North Carolina St.
Collins, Larry	RB	6-1	200	Texas A & I
Miller, Mark	QB	6-2	180	Bowling Green
Pullara, Pete	G	6-4	250	Tenn.-Chatt.
Wright, Keith	WR	5-11	177	Memphis State
Pitts, Al	C	6-4	231	Michigan State
Turnbow, Jesse	DT	6-6	271	Tennessee
Kramer, Jon	G	6-5	256	Baylor
Watson, Brent	T	6-5	251	Tennessee
Gillard, Larry	DT	6-5	250	Mississippi St.
Biedermann, Leo	T	6-7	250	California

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of Oscar Roan, a former regular who managed only 13 catches during an injury-abbreviated '77 campaign but is operating at top speed again.

Setting the tempo for the rushing attack is Greg Pruitt, a whirling dervish who rolled up 1,086 yards on 236 carries last season, the third consecutive year he cracked the 1,000-yard plateau. Pruitt's a low-slung ball totter with tremendous balance which enables him to bounce off enemy tacklers for extra yardage, and he's also an accomplished passer who tossed three scoring aeriels in '77 off the halfback option play.

Hard-blocking Cleo Miller, who blasted for 756 yards on the ground and led the team with 41 pass receptions a year ago, is stationed at the other running back. Miller and Greg Pruitt give the Browns a strong 1-2 running punch, but after them depth is flimsy, and that could be a problem in this year's expanded 16-game regular season.

Most noteworthy of the reserves at running back are Mike Pruitt and Larry Poole, who rushed for an aggregate 323 yards in '77. Pruitt's a former No. 1 draftee ('76) with great natural ability, but so far his pro career has been marred by fumbles and erratic play.

The offensive line turned in a fairly sound performance last season, although some of the luster was diminished by the number of holding penalties they were hit with. As a team, the Browns were socked with a staggering 125 penalties in '77 (for 1,046 lost yards), many of them against the guys in the offensive line. They'll have to learn that this is the NFL and not an Arthur Murray dance studio.

At the pivot spot is six-year veteran Tom DeLeone, a valuable center with good quickness off the ball. Backing him up are Gerry Sullivan and Leo Tierney, the latter returning after missing all of last season with an injury.

Plugging the guard holes are Henry Sheppard and Bob Jackson, sometimes reliable performers, with relief help from Al Dennis. Outside at the tackle berths, the regulars are Doug Dieken—the steadiest blocker in the line—and Bob Lingenfelter. Lingenfelter's an awesome physical specimen at 6-7 and 280-pounds, and he'll be a hellish pass blocker once he's a bit more seasoned.

**DEFENSE:** Things looked pretty bleak for Cleveland's defensive unit last season when top draft pick Robert Jackson (linebacker) and All-Pro tackle Jerry Sherk went down with injuries. But the Browns managed to pick up the slack and turn in a solid defensive performance, and the picture is that much brighter this year with Sherk and Jackson operating at top form again.

Tackle Sherk returned late in the '77 campaign, and while his play wasn't quite up to past standards, he was still a bulwark in the front wall. Sherk's a 250-pounder with great quickness who plays tough against the run and is one of the best inside pass rushers around. Entering his ninth pro season, he is among the premier pit men in the NFL.

At the opposite tackle is veteran Earl Edwards, who led the down linemen in tackles last season with 83 and chalked up three quarterback sacks. Supplying depth at tackle is second-year pro Mickey Sims,

1977 LEADERS					
PASS	A/C	INT	YDS	TD	
Sipe	195/112	14	1233	9	
Mays	121/67	10	797	6	
REC	NO	YDS	AVG	TD	
Miller	41	291	7.1	1	
Pruitt, G.	37	471	12.7	1	
INT	NO	YDS	AVG	TD	
Darden	6	107	17.8	1	
Irons	3	99	33.0	1	
RUSH	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD	
Pruitt, G.	236	1086	4.6	3	
Miller	163	756	4.6	4	
PUNT	NO	YDS	AVG	BK	
Coleman	61	2389	39.2	2	
Cockroft	1	30	30.0	1	
SCORE	TD	EP/MA	FG/MA	PTS	
Cockroft	0	30/31	17/23	81	
Miller	5	0/0	0/0	30	

a fine prospect who filled in a year ago when Sherk was injured and did an outstanding job.

Firing in from one line flank is Joe "Turkey" Jones, second on the team in quarterback sacks in '77 with nine, while guarding the other flank is third-year pro Mike St. Clair, another of those outstanding defensive linemen who played

1977 Regular Season Statistics		
	BROWNS	OPP
FIRST DOWNS	271	261
NET RUSH	2200	2098
Avg Per Game	157.1	149.9
NET PASS	2175	2017
Att/Comp	377/208	340/184
Had Int	31	23
Avg Per Game	155.4	144.1
PUNTS/AVG	62/39.0	70/37.6
Punts Return/Yds	38/322	31/558
Avg Per Return	8.5	18.0
KICKOFF-RET/YDS	53/1075	50/986
Avg Per Return	20.3	19.7
FUMBLES/LOST	34/22	32/16
FIELD GOALS	17/23	16/22
PATS	30/31	27/32
TOTAL POINTS	269	267

his college ball at Grambling. The leading sacker last season, and the foremost reserve at the line flanks, is Mack Mitchell, a 6-8 skyscraper who put the blast on ten enemy quarterbacks.

Holding forth at the middle linebacking position is Dick Ambrose, a four-year pro who led the Browns in total tackles a year ago with 161. All you have to do is

Cleveland Browns 1978 Veteran Roster									
NO	NAME	POS	HT	WT	AGE	YR	COLLEGE	GAMES	IN '77
52	Ambrose, Dick	LB	6-0	235	25	4	Virginia	14	
60	Babich, Bob	LB	6-2	231	31	9	Miami (Ohio)	14	
28	Bolton, Ron	CB	6-2	170	28	7	Norfolk State	14	
12	Cockroft, Don	K	6-1	195	33	11	Adams State	14	
9	Coleman, Greg	P	6-0	178	24	2	Florida A&M	14	
23	Craven, Bill	S	5-10	185	27	2	Harvard	0	
27	Darden, Thom	S	6-2	193	28	6	Michigan	14	
63	Darrow, Barry	T	6-7	260	28	5	Montana	14	
21	Davis, Oliver	CB	6-1	200	24	2	Tennessee State	14	
54	DeLeone, Tom	C	6-2	248	28	7	Ohio State	14	
62	Dennis, Al	G	6-4	250	27	4	Grambling	14	
73	Dieken, Doug	T	6-5	252	29	8	Illinois	14	
35	Duncan, Brian	RB	6-0	201	26	3	S'thern Methodist	14	
66	Edwards, Earl	DT	6-7	256	32	10	Wichita	14	
83	Feacher, Ricky	WR-KR	5-10	174	24	3	Mississippi Val.	14	
50	Garlington, John	LB	6-1	221	32	11	Louisiana State	13	
55	Graf, Dave	LB	6-2	215	25	4	Penn State	14	
59	Hall, Charlie	LB	6-3	235	30	8	Houston	14	
86	Irons, Gerald	LB	6-2	230	31	9	Maryland-E. Shore	14	
68	Jackson, Robert	G	6-5	250	25	4	Duke	14	
58	Johnson, Mark	LB	6-2	236	25	4	Missouri	7	
64	Jones, Joe	DE	6-6	250	30	8	Tennessee State	14	
47	Jones, Ricky	S	6-1	195	23	2	Tuskegee	3	
75	Lingenfelter, Bob	T	6-7	277	24	2	Nebraska	14	
85	Lugan, Dave	WR	6-4	226	24	3	Colorado	14	
7	Luck, Terry	QB	6-3	205	26	2	Nebraska	4	
8	Marangi, Gary	QB	6-2	203	26	4	Boston College	0	
10	Mays, Dave	QB	6-1	204	29	3	Texas Southern	7	
30	Miller, Cleo	RB	5-11	202	26	5	Arkansas AM&N	14	
70	Mitchell, Mack	DE	6-7	245	26	4	Houston	14	
84	Parris, Gary	TE	6-2	226	28	6	Florida State	14	
20	Peters, Tony	S	6-1	192	25	4	Oklahoma	14	
38	Poole, Larry	RB	6-0	195	26	4	Kent State	13	
34	Pruitt, Greg	RB	5-10	190	27	6	Oklahoma	14	
43	Pruitt, Mike	RB	6-0	214	24	3	Purdue	13	
81	Roan, Oscar	TE	6-6	214	27	4	S'thern Methodist	10	
33	Rucker, Reggie	WR	6-2	190	31	9	Boston U.	14	
22	Scott, Clarence	CB	6-0	180	29	8	Kansas State	13	
65	Sheppard, Henry	G	6-6	246	26	3	S'thern Methodist	13	
72	Sherk, Jerry	DT	6-4	250	30	9	Oklahoma State	7	
78	Sims, Mickey	DT	6-5	282	23	2	South Carolina SL	12	
17	Sipe, Brian	QB	6-1	190	29	5	San Diego State	9	
74	St. Clair, Mike	DE-DT	6-5	245	25	3	Grambling	11	
79	Sullivan, Gerry	C-T	6-4	250	26	5	Illinois	13	
80	Williams, Lawrence	WR-KR	5-10	173	25	3	Texas Tech	3	
25	Woolsey, Rolly	S-KR	6-1	182	25	4	Boise State	14	

watch the hard-hitting Ambrose play to see how he earned his distinctive nickname: "Bam-Bam."

Providing depth in the middle are former regular Bob Babich and the aforementioned Robert Jackson. Jackson is a muscular 230-pounder with great range and savage hitting ability. He will be a strong candidate for starting duties now that he's mended from a knee injury that wiped out his entire rookie year.

On duty at one outside linebacking spot is nine-year veteran Gerald Irons, second in total tackles (102) last season. Irons is a "big play" guy who came up with three pass interceptions in '77, one of which he returned 53 yards for a touchdown.

At the other outside 'backer spot is Charlie Hall, the most consistent of the starting trio. Hall notched 93 tackles (64 of them solo) last season, and he tied for the team lead with two fumble recoveries.

The reserve strength at the outside linebacking spots is solid, led by John Garlington, Dave Graf and Mark Johnson. Garlington is an 11-year pro who used to be a starter for the Browns, and he can still play rock-ribbed defense in relief roles.

As long as you don't look far past the starting foursome, the Browns are in tip-top condition in the secondary. But there's a lack of quality depth in the deep zones that will cause some serious problems if too many regulars get banged-up.

The pacesetter in the secondary is free safety Thom Darden, an excellent defender who led the team in pass interceptions (six) and was the leading tackler among the defensive backs last season. Darden is one of those versatile players who excels at stopping the run and the pass, and he's one of the finest though most underrated free safeties in the AFC.

Stationed at strong safety is Tony Peters, a capable ball hawk in his fourth pro season. However, the only experienced reserve at safety is journeyman Rollie Woolsey. Prospects would be brighter if Broderick Jones and Bill Craven—both of whom missed last season with injuries—could come back and help.

Firmly entrenched at one cornerback is Oliver Davis, who claimed a starting job as a rookie last year and should develop into an outstanding defender. Sharing duties at the other corner are veterans Ron Bolton and Clarence Scott, who notched three pass interceptions apiece in '77. There's also Ken Ellis, a former All-Pro with the Green Bay Packers, but his status is in doubt since he's entered the free agent market and may sign with another team.

In terms of longevity, the Browns have one of the elder statesmen among NFL kickers in placement specialist Don Cockroft, who drilled 30 of 31 PATs and 17 of 23 field goals last season. The punting is taken care of by Greg Coleman, who averaged 39.2 yards a kick in '77 and showed good accuracy by rolling 23 of his boots dead inside the 20-yard line.

**GAMEPLAN CONCLUSION:** After enjoying modest success in their first two years under Forrest Gregg, the bottom fell out on the Browns last season. And like the old adage has it, you can't fire all the players when things go bad so you give the heave-ho to the coach instead.

1978 GamePlan PRO-FOOTBALL

## PROVEN WEEKLY WINNERS YEAR AFTER YEAR

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The new skipper, Sam Rutigliano, inherits a club that is not without its share of problems, but one that seems capable of much more than they accomplished in '77. On offense, the "key" is the quarterback position, which will be stable if Sipe rebounds from his injury. However, if he can't affect a complete recovery, the job will probably be ceded to either Mays or Luck, and we're not at all convinced that they can handle the spot adequately. The passing attack should be stronger, provided again quarterback Sipe is healthy, because he'll have excellent targets for his spirals in Rucker, Logan, Parris and Roan. The ground game is outstanding, powered by Greg Pruitt and Miller, although the lack of quality depth at these positions could prove troublesome. In the offensive line, well, if these guys can start blocking more (and holding less) they could give the offense a big boost. There is, however, a lack of overall quality up front that might force the Browns to shuffle their personnel before the season is over. It's long been the case in Cleveland that the real strength of this team is the defense, and the strongest part is the front wall. Bulwarked by stellar performers like Sherk, Edwards, Sims, Jones, St. Clair and Mitchell, the Browns are both deep and talented in the line, and there's very little that will slip by these rugged defenders. The linebacking crew is solid, and should be even better with promising Robert Jackson returning from the injured reserve list. Rounding out the defense, the secondary is just as sound as most other areas, although the reserve strength in the deep zones (especially at safety) leaves something to be desired. First-year skipper Rutigliano is no starry-eyed dreamer with visions of leading his Browns to an AFC Central title in his maiden voyage. But he does expect the team to be stronger and more competitive this season, and that should pay off with a slightly improved won-lost mark and a determined bid to vacate the division cellar.

**Don't pay  
in July and pray  
in October.**

See Page 127



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# AFC WEST



Denver's Lyle Alzado (77) closes in on KC's Mike Livingston.

# Oakland Raiders

(11-3-0)

So close, but yet so far! That's a pretty fair assessment of last year's Raiders, who lost a 20-17 heartbreaker to the Denver Broncos in the AFC title game. And wouldn't you know it, like so many other games last season the final outcome of that Oakland-Denver clash may have been decided by another bad call by an official.

THE FUMBLE, the one by the Broncos' Rob Lytle late in the third period, was obviously a fumble. Heck, your wife could have called that one! The official on the play blew it, plain and simple. Denver cashed in on that opportunity with a touchdown, and though the Raiders came back with 14 last quarter points, it still left them three short in their quest for a second straight conference title.

Okay, so all that seems like old stuff now, with the '78 NFL season about to kickoff. But it gives GAMEPLAN a chance to announce, loud and clear, that it's high time something (and something drastic) was done about the caliber of officiating in pro football.

The NFL officials always give it their best shot, about this there's no question. But for one reason or another, "bad calls" are deciding the outcome of far too many games. And when that starts happening, pro football as entertainment is D-E-A-D.

End of sermon, and on to a look at Coach John Madden's latest edition of Raiders, a first-class team from top to bottom. This is basically the same club that whopped the Minnesota Vikings (32-14) two years back in Super Bowl XI, and Oakland could very easily turn up again in the next Super Bowl if they can avoid the many injuries that swept their ranks in '77.

**OFFENSE:** One of the Raiders who was hampered last season was quarterback Ken (Snake) Stabler, but it makes you chuckle when people say he had an "off-year." How can you classify Stabler's performance in '77 (169-294 pass completions; 2,176 yards; 20 touchdown aeri-als) as an off-year? There're a lot of NFL quarterbacks who'd sell their souls for those kinds of figures!

Throwing off that balky knee, the "Snake" did toss 20 interceptions last year, which is more than he normally gives up in two full seasons. But an off-season rehabilitation program has strengthened the knee, and a healthy Stabler is perhaps the finest quarterback in the NFL. Come to think of it, even when he's limping the "Snake" is one of the best around.

Providing depth at the signal calling spot are Mike Rae, who completed 15 of 30 passes last season, and David Humm, who didn't attempt a single aerial. Rae has shown on brief occasion that he's got the ability to run the attack if needed, but Humm's got a lot of learning to do before he'll be ready.

It would be a mistake to give all the credit for Oakland's explosive passing

## 1978 Schedule

Sep 3	at Denver
Sep 10	at San Diego
Sep 17	at Green Bay
Sep 24	NEW ENGLAND
Oct 1	at Chicago
Oct 8	HOUSTON
Oct 15	KANSAS CITY
Oct 22	at Seattle
Oct 29	SAN DIEGO
Nov 5	at Kansas City
Nov 13	at Cincinnati
Nov 19	DETROIT
Nov 26	SEATTLE
Dec 3	DENVER
Dec 10	at Miami
Dec 17	MINNESOTA

attack to quarterback Stabler. Because when the "Snake" cuts loose with one of his southpaw bullets, the end result might not be so rewarding if he didn't have targets like Dave Casper, Cliff Branch and Fred Biletnikoff.

Tight end Casper turned in his usual brilliant performance in '77, when he thundered for 584 yards and six touchdowns on 48 catches. Casper's a pugnacious receiver who hangs onto the ball even when he's getting belted from every side, and the Raiders usually call his number when they're down close to the goal line and really need the "big" catch—the one for six points.

If no one objects, we'll compare Oakland's wide receiving duo (Branch and Biletnikoff) to the protagonists in the

**You Missed The  
Best  
See Page 5**

Raiders	1977 Results	Opp
24	San Diego	0
16	at Pittsburgh	7
37	at Kansas City	28
26	at Cleveland	10
7	Denver	30
28	at N.Y. Jets	27
24	at Denver	14
44	Seattle	7
34	Houston	29
7	at San Diego	12
34	Buffalo	13
14	at Los Angeles	20
35	Minnesota	13
21	Kansas City	20

"Tortoise and the Hare." Branch (the hare in this case) darted for 540 yards on 33 receptions last season and zipped under six scoring aeri-als. The much slower, but equally dangerous, Biletnikoff (the tortoise) worked his way free to also make 33 catches in '77, which he hauled for 446 yards and five TDs. When you put the blazing speed of one (Branch) and the dogged determination of the other (Biletnikoff) together, you've got the kind of talented combination that can drive enemy defenders into a frenzy.

The Raiders are also well-stocked in reserves at the receiving positions, but especially so at tight end, where Warren Bankston, a ferocious blocker, and former All-Pro Ted Kwalick (ex-San Francisco 49er) are on call. The leading back-ups at wide receiver are Mike Siani, a part-time starter last season when he caught two scoring aeri-als and a total of 24 passes, and five-year pro Morris Bradshaw, who averaged a jazzy 18 yards on five receptions in '77.

Oakland has always been noted for having a punishing rushing attack, one which simply overpowers an opposing defense. And the present crew of ball carriers is cut from that very mold,

## Oakland Raiders Rookie Roster

(Listed in order of selection)

NAME	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
Browning, Dave	DE	6-5	232	Washington
Jensen, Derrick	RB	6-1	225	Texas-Arlington
Mason, Lindsey	T	6-5	260	Kansas
Harvey, Maurice	DB	5-10	185	Ball State
Stewart, Joe	WR	5-11	175	Missouri
Ramsey, Derrick	TE	6-4	222	Kentucky
Davis, Tom	C	6-3	242	Nebraska
Levenseller, Mike	WR	6-1	181	Washington St
Whittington, Arthur	RB	5-10	175	Southern Methodist
Inman, Earl	LB	6-0	210	Bethune-Cookman
Nickols, Mark	DE	6-3	231	Colorado St
Jones, Dean	QB	5-8	179	Fresno State
Glazebrook, Bob	DB	6-0	205	Fresno State
Conron, Joe	WR	6-1	170	Pacific





# POINTWISE!

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**TOP 6 COLLEGE &**  
**RATED PROS: 8-0-2**

**LAST 4 WEEKS:**  
**COLLEGE: 16-7-1!**  
**Top Five College: 14-5-1**

**TWICE IN 3 WEEKS:**  
**PROS SWEEP: 4-0!**  
**Top 5 College Past 7 Wks: 24-9-2**

**WE'RE RED HOT!**  
**COLLEGE PICKS: 6-1-1.**  
**TOP COLLEGE TO DATE: 4-0.**  
**PROS TO DATE: 27-14.**

**AGAIN LAST WEEK:**  
**PROS WON 3 out of 4**  
**COLLEGE: 4 OF TOP 5!**

**THE BEAT GOES ON.**  
**PROS SWEEP: 4-0!**  
**COLLEGE: 6 OF TOP 7!**

**OUR TOP PRO**  
**CHOICES THIS**  
**SEASON: 8-2-1**

**AGAIN LAST WEEK:**  
**PROS SWEEP: 4-0!**  
**TOP COLLEGE MOVE TO 5 of 6!**

**LAST 3 WEEKS:**  
**COLLEGE: 13-4-1!**  
**TOP PROS: 3-0!**

**LAST 6 WEEKS:**  
**COLLEGE: 25-8-3!**  
**Top Five College: 22-6-2**

**THE BEAT GOES ON.**  
**4TH TIME THIS YEAR**  
**PROS SWEEP: 4-0!**

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# POINTWISE!

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because they can dish it out, lump-for-lump, just as well as they get it.

Leading the onslaught is five-year pro Mark van Eeghen, who powered for 1,273 yards on 327 rushing attempts last season and barreled into enemy end zones seven times. van Eeghen is a 225-pound sledgehammer who can be virtually unstoppable when he gets tucked in behind Oakland's brutish front wall, and he's the first ball carrier in team history to put together back-to-back 1,000 yard rushing seasons.

Opposite him is the "Mr. Outside" in the ground attack, Clarence Davis, who zipped for 787 yards on 194 sorties and scored five TDs a year ago. Davis is a versatile ball carrier with the power to go up the middle, but his real forte is running to the outside, where he's a threat to go the distance every time he turns the corner.

Depth at running back is (what else?) very good, consisting of Pete Banaszak, Carl Garrett and Terry Robiskie. Banaszak and Garrett are accomplished veterans who can be dangerous ball carriers when given a chance, while second-year pro Robiskie is a low-slung (6-0, 210) blaster who looks tailor-made for Oakland's bareknuckles rushing attack.

Supplying the blocking power to clear the way for that balanced offense is, man-for-man, probably the finest front wall in the game. You might compare Oakland's offensive line to a can of STP oil additive, because they keep the attack operating on all cylinders. And like Robert (Baretta) Blake puts it: an' dat's the name of dat tune!

Over the ball at center is seven-year pro Dave Dalby, who took over when longtime stalwart Jim Otto retired and has developed into a Pro Bowl performer at the pivot spot. Backing him up is Steve Sylvester, a good young prospect but still a little rough around the edges.

Plugging the guard holes are Gene Upshaw and George Buehler, one of the NFL's premier tandems; but there's been speculation Buehler may retire or ask to be traded. It's only speculation, of course, but if it proves true, his starting job will go to second-year pro Mickey Marvin, an excellent prospect but woefully lacking in NFL experience.

Holding forth at one tackle is All-Pro Art Shell, one of the game's most punishing blockers, while sharing duties at the spot opposite him are John Vella and Henry Lawrence. Vella was a regular until felled by an injury last season, and the Raiders are hopeful he can stay healthy because his replacement (Lawrence) is still a little too inconsistent to hold down the starting assignment.

**DEFENSE:** Maybe it's their playing style. The way they run around crashing into anything in an enemy uniform, hitting with the kind of wallop you'd usually associate with an elephant rifle. Maybe that explains why hardly a year goes by when Oakland's defensive unit isn't riddled by injuries but still finds the necessary ingredients to put the clamps on opponents.

Last season was no exception as linebacker Phil Villapiano, cornerbacks George Atkinson and Neal Colzie, plus end Charley Philby all missed time with

injuries. Yet the Raiders managed to adjust well enough to turn in another solid performance in '77, limiting 14 regular season opponents to only 230 points and a measly six touchdowns on the ground.

The heart-and-soul of that defense, as it is with any team like the Raiders with their 3-4 alignment, is the linebacking crew. And while there's a veritable wealth of standout 'backers on hand, it would help if their inspirational leader, Villapiano, stayed healthy this year.

Floyd Rice did a bang-up job as his replacement in '77, but the Raiders missed Villapiano's leadership, and his return this season is bound to pay off with a more solid defensive performance. With Villapiano and ten-year standout Ted Hendricks on the outside sandwiching middle men Monte Johnson and Willie Hall, the Raiders boast one of the

best four-man linebacking crews around.

Unfortunately, when you use the 3-4, it requires great depth at the 'backer positions, and this may prove an Achilles' Heel for the Raiders if too many injuries strike. Floyd Rice, of course, is a seasoned veteran able to step in, but the remaining depth consists of Jeff Barnes, Randy McClanahan and Rod Martin—all mere second year pros with very limited experience.

The wheelhorse in Oakland's three-man front wall is middle guard Dave Rowe, and check out these dimensions: he stands 6-7 and weighs 270 pounds. Is it any wonder very little gets by him! Backing him up is former All-Pro Mike McCoy (ex-Green Bay Packer), a steady veteran and no "runt" himself at 6-5 and 275.

Crashing in from one line flank is Otis Sistrunk, who has imprinted his helmet

Oakland Raiders 1978 Veteran Roster

NO.	NAME	POS	HT	WT	AGE	YRS	COLLEGE	GAMES IN '77
43	Atkinson, George	S	6-0	185	31	11	Morris Brown	12
40	Banaszak, Pete	RB	6-0	210	34	13	Miami (Fla)	14
46	Bankston, Warren	TE	6-4	235	31	10	Tulane	14
56	Barnes, Jeff	LB	6-2	215	23	2	California	14
25	Biletnikoff, Fred	WR	6-1	190	35	14	Florida State	14
81	Bradshaw, Morris	WR	6-1	195	26	5	Ohio State	14
21	Branch, Cliff	WR	5-11	170	30	7	Colorado	13
24	Brown, Willie	CB	6-1	210	38	16	Grambling	14
64	Buehler, George	G	6-2	270	31	10	Stanford	14
87	Casper, Dave	TE	6-4	230	26	5	Notre Dame	14
20	Colzie, Neal	CB	6-2	205	25	4	Ohio State	13
50	Dalby, Dave	C	6-3	250	28	7	U.C.L.A.	14
28	Davis, Clarence	RB	5-10	195	29	8	Southern California	14
10	Douglass, Bobby	QB	6-4	228	30	10	Kansas	4
31	Garrett, Carl	RB	5-10	205	31	10	New Mex. Highlands	14
29	Ginn, Hubie	RB	5-9	185	31	9	Florida A & M	10
8	Guy, Ray	K	6-3	195	29	6	Southern Miss	14
39	Hall, Willie	LB	6-2	225	29	6	Southern California	14
37	Hayes, Lester	CB	6-0	208	23	2	Texas A & M	14
83	Hendricks, Ted	LB	6-7	220	31	10	Miami (Fla)	14
11	Humm, David	QB	6-2	185	26	4	Nebraska	14
42	Jackson, Steve	S	6-1	190	23	2	Louisiana State	6
33	Jennings, Rick	WR	5-9	180	25	3	Maryland	2
58	Johnson, Monte	LB	6-5	240	27	6	Nebraska	14
34	Kunz, Terry	RB	6-1	215	26	2	Colorado	0
89	Kwalick, Ted	TE	6-4	225	31	10	Penn State	12
70	Lawrence, Henry	T	6-4	270	27	5	Florida A & M	14
68	Little, Everett	T	6-4	280	24	2	Houston	0
14	Mann, Errol	K	6-0	205	37	11	North Dakota	14
53	Martin, Rod	LB	6-2	205	24	2	Southern California	1
65	Marvin, Mickey	G	6-4	270	23	2	Tennessee	8
72	Matuszak, John	DE	6-8	275	28	6	Tampa	14
57	McClanahan, Randy	LB	6-5	225	24	2	S'west Louisiana	14
76	McCoy, Mike	DT	6-5	275	30	9	Notre Dame	14
55	Nelson, Bob	LB	6-4	232	25	4	Nebraska	11
47	Phillips, Charles	S	6-2	215	26	4	Southern California	7
77	Phillyaw, Charles	DE	6-9	275	24	3	Texas Southern	3
15	Rae, Mike	QB	6-0	190	27	3	Southern California	10
52	Rice, Floyd	LB	6-3	225	29	8	Alcorn A & M	13
35	Robiskie, Terry	RB	6-1	210	24	2	Louisiana State	14
74	Rowe, Dave	DT	6-7	270	33	12	Penn State	14
78	Shell, Art	T	6-5	275	32	11	Maryland E-S	14
49	Siani, Mike	WR	6-2	195	28	7	Villanova	12
60	Sistrunk, Otis	DE	6-4	270	31	7	None	12
12	Stabler, Ken	QB	6-3	215	33	9	Alabama	13
66	Sylvester, Steve	C	6-4	260	25	4	Notre Dame	14
32	Tatum, Jack	S	5-11	205	30	7	Ohio State	11
26	Thomas, Skip	CB	6-1	205	28	7	Southern California	12
67	Toomay, Pat	DE	6-6	245	30	9	Vanderbilt	14
63	Upshaw, Gene	G	6-5	255	33	12	Texas A & I	14
30	van Eeghen, Mark	RB	6-2	225	26	5	Colgate	14
75	Vella, John	T	6-4	260	28	7	Southern California	5
41	Villapiano, Phil	LB	6-2	225	29	8	Bowling Green	2
22	Warren, Jimmy	CB	5-11	175	39	13	Illinois	2

number (60) on the chest of more than one enemy quarterback. Sharing the other flank are John Matuszak, another good-sized lad at 6-7 and 270, and Pat Toomay, a cat-quick veteran brought in when the Raiders are faced with a passing situation. There's also hope that Charles Phillyaw, who could be a "Close Encounter" of the fourth kind at 6-9 and 280, can stay healthy and start harnessing some of his vast potential.

They were going down left and right, that is the players were, in Oakland's defensive secondary last season, when George Atkinson, Neal Colzie, Mike Davis, Lester Hayes and Charles Phillips all lost playing time due to injuries. If all or part of that talented crew can stay healthy in '78, the secondary will be just that much tougher.

Joining them in the deep zones will be free safety Jack Tatum, who led the team with six pass interceptions last year, strong safety Skip Thomas and cornerback Willie Brown, the leading pass thief (38) in team history. That threesome gives the Raiders a solid nucleus in the deep zones, but it's imperative that all last year's walking wounded recover.

You've heard it a hundred times before, so make it 101, because Oakland's Ray Guy is the best punter in the NFL—bar none. Last year, in typical fashion, Guy boomed 59 punts for a league-leading 43.3 yard average, and he dropped 11 of those kicks dead inside the 20-yard line. Placement kicking is the province of Erroll Mann, and by no mere coincidence he also led the NFL last season with 99 points on 39 of 42 PATs and 20 of 28 field goals. The Raiders are a team that's always known the value of good kickers, and the present duo (Guy and Mann) execute to perfection.

**GAMEPLAN CONCLUSION:** The Raiders saw the AFC title slip from their fingers last season, although some would amend that to read it was taken from them by an overzealous official. Be that as it may, the important question facing the Raiders is how that tainted loss to the Broncos will affect them. In our estimation, it will make Oakland more determined to take back (the AFC title) what they still think is rightfully theirs this season. And the combination of the outstanding personnel on this team and their tremendous motivation is certain to make them capable of accomplishing exactly that. Offensively, there's nothing but talent on hand: at the skill positions, all along the front wall—hell, even the water boy runs a 4.5 in the 40! And with the catalyst for that dynamic attack, quarterback Stabler, operating at full speed again, there's very little that will stand in the way of Oakland's offense. The defensive picture could be just as encouraging—but only if stalwarts like Villapiano and Atkinson can stay healthy. Coach John Madden's team had to take an unaccustomed back seat to the Denver Broncos in the AFC West last season, but we look for the Raiders to regain their perch in '78. Granted, the Broncos have served notice that they're no longer to be overlooked as a title contender, and the resurgent San Diego Chargers look capable of pulling a few surprises. However, the Raiders should

1977 LEADERS					
PASS	A/C	INT	YDS	TD	
Stabler	294/169	20	2176	20	
Rae	30/15	4	162	1	
REC	NO	YDS	AVG	TD	
Casper	48	584	12.2	6	
Branch	33	540	16.4	6	
INT	NO	YDS	AVG	TD	
Tatum	6	146	24.3	0	
Brown	4	24	6.0	0	
RUSH	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD	
vanEeghen	327	1273	3.9	7	
Davis	194	787	4.1	5	
PUNT	NO	YDS	AVG	BK	
Guy	59	2552	43.3	14	
SCORE	TD	EP/MA	FG/MA	PTS	
Mann	0	39/42	20/28	99	
vanEeghen	7	0/0	0/0	42	

be able to repulse all those challenges and claim the regular season championship, and with it, a playoff berth. In the annual run for the Super Bowl, also known as the

1977 Regular Season Statistics		
	RAIDERS	OPP
FIRST DOWNS	305	204
NET RUSH	2627	1754
Avg Per Game	187.6	125.3
NET PASS	2109	2222
Att/Comp	324/184	367/177
Had Int	26	24
Avg Per Game	150.6	158.7
PUNTS/AVG	59/43.3	74/37.6
Punts Return/Yds	38/373	30/217
Avg Per Return	9.8	7.2
KICKOFF-RET/YDS	49/909	63/1027
Avg Per Return	18.6	16.3
FUMBLES/LOST	22/16	31/21
FIELD GOALS	20/28	11/19
PATS	39/42	23/28
TOTAL POINTS	351	230

Pete Rozelle Derby, the Raiders are our favorites to represent the AFC in Miami's Orange Bowl (site of Super Bowl XIII) come next January.

## Denver Broncos

1978 Schedule	
Sep 3	OAKLAND
Sep 11	at Minnesota
Sep 17	SAN DIEGO
Sep 24	at Kansas City
Oct 1	SEATTLE
Oct 8	at San Diego
Oct 16	CHICAGO
Oct 22	at Baltimore
Oct 29	at Seattle
Nov 5	NEW YORK JETS
Nov 12	at Cleveland
Nov 19	GREEN BAY
Nov 23	at Detroit
Dec 3	at Oakland
Dec 10	KANSAS CITY
Dec 16	PITTSBURGH

(12-2-0)

The rags-to-riches saga of last year's Broncos was just like something out of one of those Mother Goose stories. You know, the kind where frogs turn into handsome princes and stuff like that. Just like a fairy tale, that is, except for one very big difference.

In the Mother Goose stories, things usually wind up with that famous phrase: "and they lived happily ever after." But in the case of the '77 Broncos, who took a 27-10 pasting from the Dallas Cowboys in Super Bowl XII, the ending seemed more like something out of an Alfred Hitchcock horror story.

But, wait a minute, what's that you asked? How in the blazes did the Broncos—a team that used to wear those God-awful knee socks—wind up in the Super Bowl to begin with! Simple, they did it by whipping Oakland, Pittsburgh and the other AFC elites, and don't be surprised if the Broncos repeat as champions this year if they continue to play with such great intensity.

The man most responsible for the all-out hustle of the Denver players is Coach Red Miller, who took the helm just last

Broncos	1977 Results	Opp
7	St. Louis	0
23	Buffalo	6
24	at Seattle	13
23	Kansas City	7
30	at Oakland	7
24	at Cincinnati	13
14	Oakland	24
21	Pittsburgh	7
17	at San Diego	14
14	at Kansas City	7
27	Baltimore	13
24	at Houston	14
17	San Diego	9
6	at Dallas	14

year and enjoyed the unique distinction of leading his first team all the way to the Super Bowl. Miller is a dedicated skipper with the ability to get a maximum effort out of the Broncos, a talented team that never really hit its stride until the red-head took over in '77.

**OFFENSE:** Another guy who deserves credit for Denver's newfound success is quarterback Craig Morton, selected by many as the AFC's player-of-the-year in '77. As far as statistics are concerned, Morton wasn't all that overwhelming last season, completing a modest 51.6% of his passes (131-254) for 1,929 yards and 14 TDs. But when you take into account the number of times he bailed the team out with his passing and play-calling, it's easy to see why the Broncos are so delighted with the trade that originally brought him to the Mile High City.

Morton seems to have found himself as a solid pro signal caller after previous failures with the NY Giants and Dallas Cowboys, and his steady leadership is just what's needed to provide a stabilizing influence on offense for the Broncos. Unfortunately, there's one small prob-



lem, which is Morton's tendency to be injury-prone. And if he can't answer the opening bell, the offense won't be nearly as productive.

The No. 2 quarterback is the scrambling man from Mississippi, Norris Weese, who completed 11 of 20 aerial attempts last season. Weese is an outstanding option signal caller who drives opponents crazy with his running antics, but as a passer . . . well, he'll never be a threat to the records of Johnny Unitas and Sammy Baugh. Also on duty at quarterback is third-year pro Craig Penrose, a rangy sharpshooter with good potential but very little in the way of starting experience.

Dynamite is the word to describe Denver's pass catching contingent. The most volatile of the bunch is wide receiver Haven Moses, who averaged a sizzling 20.0 yards and scored four touchdowns on 27 receptions last season. Moses is an 11-year pro who isn't the fastest wide out in the business, but he sure does have a knack for turning up in the right place at the right time when it comes to making "clutch" catches.

The opposite wide receiver is Jack Dolbin, who zipped for 443 yards and three TDs (including an 81-yard scoring romp) on 26 catches a year ago. Dolbin is a former WFLer (Chicago Fire) and minor league player (Pottstown Firebirds) who came to Denver in '75 as a free agent. The Broncos sure wish they could find a few more diamonds-in-the-rough like that.

The leading reserve at wide receiver (and he's a jim-dandy!) is jet-propelled Rick Upchurch, undoubtedly the most electrifying open-field runner this side of Houston's Billy "White Shoes" Johnson. Last season, as a pass catcher, Upchurch averaged 20.4 yards and scored two touchdowns on 12 receptions. But even more impressive were his accomplishments as a punt returner—51 runbacks, 12.8 yard average, one 81-yard TD scamper.

When faced with a "must" passing situation, the kind where you try to get the ball to your best receiver, Denver's quarterbacks usually look for tight end Riley Odoms—because the man's a holy terror when it comes to catching the football in a crowd. Last season, while thundering for 429 yards and three scores on 37 receptions, Odoms demolished approximately 20 enemy defenders, and it seems high time he starts getting as much recognition as guys like Dave Casper (Oakland) and Russ Francis (New England).

Deep, deeper and deepest is how the Denver rushing attack stacks up, employing five different players on an alternating basis. Coach Miller is a firm believer that you rotate players according to situations, especially at running back, and how can you argue with the man given the success his method has achieved both at New England (as offensive coordinator) and Denver!

Leading the plethora of ball carriers is Otis Armstrong, a two-time 1,000-yard ground gainer (1974, '76), who rambled for 489 yards and four TDs on 130 sorties last season. Armstrong is a slashing runner with a low-center-of-gravity at just 5-10, which accounts for his ability to

## Denver Broncos Rookie Roster

(Listed in order of selection)

NAME	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
Latimer, Don	DT	6-2	238	Miami (Fla)
Gay, William	TE	6-6	225	Southern Cal.
Smith, Frank	T	6-5	250	Alabama A & M
Kinney, Vince	WR	6-3	190	Maryland
Brumley, Lacy	T	6-7	258	Clemson

bounce off enemy tacklers and go for the extra yardage.

Rounding out the cast at running back are, in alphabetical order: Jim Jensen, Jon Keyworth, Rob Lytle and Lonnie Perrin. And if that line-up doesn't impress you all that much consider this—as an aggregate, they accounted for 1,318 yards rushing and a total of eight touchdowns (six rushing, two passing) last season.

One of Coach Miller's biggest single accomplishments since his arrival in

Denver has been his rejuvenation of the offensive line, a solid unit that supplies the blocking wallop to make the attack work. The pivot in the front wall is Mike Montler, an ex-Buffalo Bill regular and one of the finest centers in the game. Backing him up is Bobby Maples, a former starter for the Broncos entering his seventh pro season.

Blowing 'em out from the guard positions are Tom Glassic and Paul Howard, with support from promising Steve Schindler, the team's No. 1 pick in the '77

## Denver Broncos 1978 Veteran Roster

GAMES								IN '77
NO.	NAME	POS	HT	WT	AGE	YRS	COLLEGE	
73	Allison, Hank	OT	6-3	255	31	6	San Diego St.	3
77	Alzado, Lyle	DE	6-3	250	29	8	Yankton Col.	14
24	Armstrong, Otis	RB	5-10	196	28	6	Purdue	10
75	Bain, Bill	T	6-4	270	26	4	So. California	14
54	Baska, Rich	LB	6-3	225	26	3	UCLA	4
68	Carter, Rubin	DT	6-0	256	26	4	Miami	14
79	Chavous, Barney	DE	6-3	252	27	6	So. Carolina St.	13
10	Dilts, Bucky	P	5-9	183	25	2	Georgia	14
82	Dolbin, Jack	WR	5-10	180	30	4	Wake Forest	14
85	Egloff, Ron	TE	6-5	238	23	2	Wisconsin	13
56	Evans, Larry	LB	6-2	216	25	3	Mississippi Col.	14
43	Foley, Steve	S	5-11	185	25	3	Tulane	13
62	Glassic, Tom	LB	6-2	216	24	3	Virginia	14
53	Gradishar, Randy	LB	6-3	233	26	5	Ohio State	14
63	Grant, John	DT	6-3	246	26	6	So. California	14
60	Howard, Paul	G	6-3	260	28	5	Brigham Young	14
65	Hyde, Glenn	OT	6-3	250	27	5	Pittsburgh	14
29	Jackson, Bernard	DT	6-0	178	28	7	Washington St.	14
57	Jackson, Tom	LB	5-11	220	27	6	Louisville	13
30	Jensen, Jim	RB	6-3	240	25	3	Iowa	11
32	Keyworth, Jon	RB	6-3	230	28	5	Colorado	11
41	Lytle, Rob	RB	6-1	195	24	2	Michigan	14
66	Manor, Brison	DE	6-4	248	26	2	Arkansas	13
50	Maples, Bob	C	6-3	250	38	14	Baylor	14
74	Maurer, Andy	OT	6-3	265	30	9	Oregon	13
71	Minor, Claude	OR	6-4	280	27	5	San Diego State	14
52	Montler, Mike	C	6-4	250	34	10	Colorado	14
7	Morton, Craig	QB	6-4	210	35	14	California	14
25	Moses, Haven	WR	6-2	200	32	11	San Diego State	14
58	Nairne, Rob	LB	6-4	220	24	2	Oregon State	13
88	Odoms, Riley	TE	6-4	230	28	7	Houston	14
23	Pane, Chris	S	5-11	180	25	2	Chico State	11
12	Penrose, Craig	QB	6-3	205	25	3	San Diego State	8
35	Perrin, Lonnie	RB	6-1	222	26	3	Illinois	14
21	Polli, Randy	S	6-3	190	26	5	Stanford	14
40	Rich, Randy	DB	5-10	181	25	2	New Mexico	0
26	Riley, Larry	DB	5-10	195	24	2	Salem	5
59	Rizzo, Joe	LB	6-1	220	28	5	Mer. Mar. Acad.	13
67	Schindler, Steve	G	6-3	260	24	2	Boston Col.	14
86	Schultz, John	WR	5-10	182	25	3	Maryland	14
70	Smith, Paul	DT	6-3	256	33	11	New Mexico	12
51	Swenson, Bob	LB	6-3	220	25	4	California	14
36	Thompson, Bill	S	6-1	200	32	10	Maryland State	14
55	Turk, Godwin	LB	6-3	230	28	5	Southern	13
15	Turner, Jim	K	6-2	205	37	15	Utah State	14
80	Upchurch, Rick	WR	5-10	170	26	4	Minnesota	14
14	Weese, Norris	QB	6-1	195	27	3	Mississippi	14
20	Wright, Louis	CB	6-2	195	25	4	San Jose State	14

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college draft. Massive Claudie Minor (6-4, 280), who looks like a one-man version of the Rocky Mountains, plugs one tackle hole. Opposite him is nine-year veteran Andy Maurer, while providing good depth at tackle are Henry Allison and Glenn Hyde.

**DEFENSE:** What does the expression "Orange Crush" mean to you? Does it sound like some kind of sundae you might eat at your local Baskin-Robbins ice cream emporium? Well, if that's what you think it is, you flunk the test of a true-blue pro football fan who would automatically know that "Orange Crush" refers to the Denver defensive unit.

The Bronco defenders earned that distinctive nickname because of the aggressive way they play the game, a no-holds-barred style that goes something like this: send out an enemy running back or pass receiver, then unleash upon them a host of orange (Denver's home color) defenders traveling at top speed, and what you have is, natch, Orange Crush.

The chief "Crunches" are the team's stellar four-man linebacking crew, led by the All-Pro tandem of Tom Jackson (outside) and Randy Gradishar (inside or middle). This outstanding duo bulwarks a superb unit that lists among the other starters Joe Rizzo and Bob Swenson. You'd have to scour the entire NFL to find a better group of linebackers than this, and they're the real strength of this rock-ribbed Denver defense.

But, like most any team that employs a 3-4 defense, the Broncos put a tremendous strain on their linebacking corps—especially when it comes to reserve strength. The most seasoned of the backups are Larry Evans and Godwin Turk, but you have to wonder if that's enough depth in an area where the injury-ratio is so high.

The first-line-of-defense, the front three, is just as impregnable, with the middle (or "nose tackle") spot occupied by Rubin Carter. Carter is the proverbial fire-plug at 6-0 and 255 pounds, and his tremendous combination of quickness and upper body strength makes him very difficult to handle without double-team blocking.

Roaring in from one defensive line flank is All-Pro Lyle Alzado, who led the down linemen in tackles last season with 87. Alzado is a rugged defender against the run, and he also has the quickness to be a relentless pass rusher, both trademarks of any great defensive end.

Patrolling the other line flank is six-year pro Barney Chavous, a steady defender who often plays in the shadow of his spectacular line mates (Carter and Alzado). The reserves in the front wall, and it's a pretty impressive group, are led by John Grant (nose tackle) and Paul Smith and Brison Manor (both DEs). Grant and Smith are one-time regulars with the experience to fill in full-time if needed, while Manor has the potential to be the best pass rusher on the team.

In the secondary, the Broncos are just as well-set when it comes to dependable players, rounding out a defensive unit that ranks with the very best in pro football. The best and "baddest" dudes in the deep zones are Louie Wright (cornerback) and Bill Thompson (strong safety), who

1977 LEADERS					
PASS	A/C	INT	YDS	TD	
Morton	254/131	8	1929	14	
Penrose	40/21	4	217	0	
REC	NO	YDS	AVG	TD	
Odoms	37	429	11.6	3	
Moses	27	539	20.0	4	
INT	NO	YDS	AVG	TD	
Thompson	5	122	24.4	0	
Jackson, T	4	95	23.8	1	
RUSH	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD	
Armstrong	130	489	3.8	4	
Perin	110	456	4.1	3	
PUNT	NO	YDS	AVG	BK	
Dilts	90	3525	39.2	5	
Weese	1	38	38.0	0	
SCORE	TD	EP/MA	FG/MA	PTS	
Turner	1	31/34	13/19	76	
Armstrong	4	0/0	0/0	24	

combined for eight pass interceptions last season when both of them wound up representing Denver in the Pro Bowl game.

Holding forth at the other corner is versatile Steve Foley, who started his pro career with the '75 Jacksonville entry in the WFL as a quarterback. Foley, who swiped three enemy aerials in '77, is a hustling ball-hawk who also plays gung-ho defense against the run.

Popping enemy pass catchers from his free safety position is Bernard Jackson, a steady seven-year veteran. Jackson, a former Cincinnati Bengal regular, was acquired not long before the '77 season started, and his outstanding play has strengthened the Bronco defense in a key area.

The foremost reserves in the secondary are Randy Polt, Larry Riley and Randy Rich. Polt is a five-year veteran with the experience to fill in if needed, but you have to wonder about youngsters like Riley and Rich, both second-year pros.

The Broncos are in first-rate shape when it comes to their kicking game, spearheaded by veteran Jim Turner, who drilled bull's-eyes on 31 of 34 PATs and 13 of 19 field goals last season. The punting part of it ain't bad either, what with left-footer Bucky Dilts handling the chores. Dilts averaged 39.2 yards on 90 boots last season, and he's possibly the best young punter to come into the league since Oakland's Ray Guy.

**GAMEPLAN CONCLUSION:** This season looms as a crossroads for Coach Miller's Broncos, the point at which they either do it with consistency one more time or fall back and be classified as another of those "flash-in-the-pan" teams that have one great year and then go kaput. It's common knowledge in pro sports that the mark of a championship team is their ability to do it not once, but again and again. Which is the dilemma

1977 Regular Season Statistics		
	BRONCOS	OPP
FIRST DOWNS	223	217
NET RUSH	2043	1530
Avg Per Game	145.9	109.3
NET PASS	1863	2244
Att/Comp	314/163	426/235
Had Int	12	25
Avg Per Game	133.1	160.3
PUNTS/AVG	91/39.2	95/40.7
Punts Return/Yds	58/712	54/397
Avg Per Return	12.3	7.4
KICKOFF-RET/YDS	34/732	50/1084
Avg Per Return	21.5	21.7
FUMBLES/LOST	28/15	27/14
FIELD GOALS	13/19	8/22
PATS	31/34	16/18
TOTAL POINTS	274	148

facing the Broncos, who must come up with an encore for their "Cinderella" performance of a year ago. On offense, Denver has the manpower to field an explosive attack, especially now that all those young turks at running back are more used to alternating with each other. Fresh running backs in pro football are what fresh horses are to the U. S. Cavalry, and coaches like Denver's Miller (along with others like Don Shula of Miami) may be setting the trend for the future by having teams loaded with quality ball carriers to pound enemy defenses into submission. The obvious key on offense for the Broncos is quarterback Morton, a superstar last season but something of a question mark now when you consider his past history of injuries and erratic play. Should one or the other of those problems crop up for Morton, the Broncos will have to turn the job over to either Weese or Penrose, not the kind of prospect apt to make you feel too secure. Folks in Denver knew exactly what they were doing when they nicknamed the team's defensive unit the "Orange Crush," because that's exactly the way guys like Jackson, Alzado, Gradishar, Thompson and the rest play the game. They're hitters, one-and-all, players who aren't afraid to get in there where the going is mighty physical. And they can be among the most intimidating defenders in the league when they play at their best. It seems very important to note, however, that the Broncos are a bit suspect when it comes to backup strength on defense, and this could make for some very serious problems should too many injuries occur. Red Miller was everybody's coach-of-the-year in '77 when he led the upstart Broncos all the way into the Super Bowl, and he'll get our vote as miracle worker-of-the-decade if his team can duplicate that performance in the coming season. With a shot at winning another AFC West title, although the Oakland Raiders will have a lot to say about that, and the NFL's newly expanded playoff set-up that allows for two wild card teams from each conference, the Broncos have a good chance at landing a berth in pro football's post-season tournament again. But we have to think that last year was one of those "dream the impossible dream" seasons for the Broncos, so we look for them to fall short in their quest to land another Super Bowl berth.

**Don't pay  
in July and pray  
in October.**

See Page 127

# GOAL!

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Georgia Tech	Wake Forest	Richmond
NC St.	Colorado	C. Michigan
Clemson	Michigan	San Diego St.
BYU	Notre Dame	Boston Col.
Ohio St.	Texas	Miami (O)
Alabama	Rice	Drake
Northwestern	Vanderbilt	Tulsa
Purdue	Syracuse	Princeton
UTEP	USC	Colgate
Tennessee	Iowa State	Cornell
Florida	Wisconsin	Brown
Washington	TCU	Dayton
Utah	California	Montana St.
Pittsburgh	UCLA	Fresno St.
Oklahoma	Michigan	VMI
Arkansas	LSU	Yale
Duke	Nebraska	Pacific
Oregon	N. Carolina	Boise St.
Oregon St.	Maryland	Dartmouth
Navy	Army	SW Louisiana
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# San Diego Chargers

(7-7-0)

There was a time when the other teams that made up the state of California's pro football family—Oakland, the LA Rams and San Francisco—looked upon the Chargers as their "poor cousins" from the south. But no one's looking down their noses at Coach Tommy Prothro's team after last season, when the resurgent Chargers hung up their best record in nine years.

In his fifth campaign at the San Diego helm, Coach Prothro has put together a fine young club, one that may just be scratching the surface of its potential. And if the Chargers need any additional incentive to do even better this year, there's speculation Prothro may retire at the end of the '78 campaign, so his players will want to send their skipper out on a winning note.

Without question, this is the finest team San Diego fans have seen since the club's championship days in the old AFL. But in order for the current edition of Chargers to reward their title-starved supporters with an AFC West championship, they'll have to find some way to get around the resident powers—Oakland and Denver. And trying to haul down the Raiders and Broncos is akin to shooting down a couple of Nike Zeus missiles with a pop-gun.

Not that we're saying the Chargers are a "pop-gun" team, of course, because exactly the opposite is true. San Diego can hurt an opponent a lot of different ways, but the most explosive element overall is the passing attack, which rolled up 160.3 yards-per-game last season despite using three different starters at quarterback.

**OFFENSE:** The regular signal caller at the end of the '77 campaign, and the logical choice to hang onto that job this year, is Dan Fouts. Last season, after missing a number of games while he was holding out in a contract dispute, Fouts returned to complete 69 of 109 passes (63.3%) for 869 yards and four touchdowns.

Fouts is a strong-armed passer and probably the most skilled of Diego's quarterbacking aspirants at running the offense. But unless he can keep the attack rolling along at top efficiency, the Chargers won't hesitate to give one of their other signal callers (James Harris and Cliff Olander) a shot at the job.

Harris, a nine-year veteran acquired in a '77 trade with the LA Rams, played up to expectations last season (109 of 211 pass completions; 1,240 yards; five TDs) although his time was limited due to injuries. If he stays healthy this year, Harris is very capable of wresting the starting job away from Fouts. Olander is the "long shot" in the quarterbacking derby, having seen only brief action (7 of 16 passes) in '77.

Pacing the pass catching corps is wide receiver Charley Joiner, who romped for 542 yards and six touchdowns on 35 grabs last season. Joiner's a seasoned veteran (10th year) with a knack for finding the

## 1978 Schedule

Sep 3	at Seattle
Sep 10	OAKLAND
Sep 17	at Denver
Sep 24	GREEN BAY
Oct 1	at New England
Oct 8	DENVER
Oct 15	MIAMI
Oct 22	at Detroit
Oct 29	at Oakland
Nov 5	CINCINNATI
Nov 12	KANSAS CITY
Nov 19	at Minnesota
Nov 26	at Kansas City
Dec 4	CHICAGO
Dec 10	SEATTLE
Dec 17	at Houston

"seams" in a zone pass defense, and he's got the straight-away quickness to go the distance once he gets his mitts on the pigskin.

There's a wide-open battle shaping up for the starting job at the other wide receiver between Johnny Rodgers, Dwight McDonald and Larry Dorsey. The most touted of that trio is the flashy Rodgers, who signs his autograph "Johnny R. Superstar." But he'll have to start performing with more consistency if he wants to measure up to his gaudy nickname.

Last season, his first with the Chargers after four years in the Canadian league, Rodgers averaged 15.6 yards on 12 receptions—good, but no superstar performance. He should be a little more settled in his second year with San Diego. If Rodgers starts delivering as expected, he'll team up with Joiner to give the passing attack wings.

The other wide receivers on hand, the aforementioned McDonald and Dorsey, combined for 23 catches last season. Third-year pro Dorsey is a jet-propelled receiver who last year averaged 19.8 yards per catch and caught two scoring passes (one that covered 67-yards). He's got the potential to be an outstanding deep threat.

At tight end for the Chargers, it looks like a reunion of old LA Ram players,

Chargers	1977 Results	Opp
0	at Oakland	24
23	at Kansas City	7
24	Cincinnati	3
14	at New Orleans	0
20	New England	24
16	Kansas City	21
14	at Miami	13
0	at Detroit	20
14	Denver	17
12	Oakland	7
30	at Seattle	28
37	Cleveland	14
9	at Denver	17
9	Pittsburgh	10

with Bob Klein and Pat Curran on duty. Both Klein and Curran (who combined for 30 pass receptions in '77) are former regulars with the Rams. Acquired via trades, they give San Diego solid pass catching and strong blocking.

The aspect of the offense that needs to show the most improvement is the rushing attack, which mustered only 125.8 yards-per-game a year ago. What the ground game most desperately needs is an outside ball carrier to complement the inside running of big bulls like Rickey Young and Don Woods.

Last season, the multi-talented Young led the team in both rushing (543 yards on 157 carries) and pass receiving (48 catches, 423 yards), and he's a rugged 200-pounder with great cutting ability for his size. His muscular counterpart, the 210-pound Woods, smashed for 405 yards on the ground in '77, but he's another "blaster" who lacks the quickness of a break-away threat.

The ball carrier best equipped to add some speed is Joe Washington, who garnered 217 yards in '77. Washington missed his rookie season ('76) because of a knee injury, which slowed his progress, but he looks ready to emerge as a dangerous runner now.

Rounding out the cast of ball toters are Bo Matthews, Clarence Williams and Hank Bauer. Matthews is a bullish runner

## San Diego Chargers Rookie Roster

(Listed in order of selection)

NAME	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
Jefferson, John	WR	6-0	185	Arizona St
Hardaway, Milton	T	6-9	340	Oklahoma St
Anderson, Rickey	RB	6-1	200	South Carolina St
Choma, John	G	6-6	243	Virginia
Featherstone, Cliff	DB	6-0	177	Colorado St
Hedrick, Gavin	P	6-3	190	Washington St
Bradley, Henry	DT	6-3	254	Alcorn St
Whitlatch, Blake	LB	6-1	221	Louisiana St
Price, Charles	TV	6-4	230	Cincinnati
Bell, Kevin	WR	5-11	177	Lamar



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who once held down a starting job for the Chargers, and his experience makes him an invaluable reserve at running back.

In order to field an explosive attack, you must have a standout blocking corps to lead the way. And the Chargers have a pack of powerful mules who would make the ones in the Boraxo Mule-Team commercials envious.

At the pivot spot is Ralph Perretta, a chunky (6-1, 250) four-year pro. Backing him at center are Charles Aiu and Bob Rush, the latter a No. 1 draft pick in '77 with the experience to challenge for the starting job.

Filling the guard holes are Doug Wilkerson, the most consistent blocker in the front wall, and promising five-year veteran Don Macek. The foremost reserve at guard is the previously mentioned Charles Aiu, also a back-up center. But after him, there's very little, and the lack of depth at guard could prove critical.

The tackle positions are the stomping grounds of Russ Washington (6-7, 290) and Billy Shields (6-7, 265), who look like a pair of Sequoia Redwoods when they stand up straight. Backstopping them is Booker Brown, a squat 250-pounder more suited for a guard position. Again, lack of proven depth at tackle may cause problems unless the Chargers pick up some additional help.

**DEFENSE:** Ah, yes, the Chargers' defensive unit. That rock-ribbed gang which brings a twinkle to Coach Prothro's eye. For off last year's performance, when the Chargers finished second in total defense and numero uno in passing defense among AFC teams, San Diego's defense shapes up as the best the team has had since the Earl Faison, Ernie Ladd units of yesteryear.

In the line, the flanks are guarded by Leroy Jones and Fred Dean, one of the finest tandems in all of pro football. Both are agile pass rushers who never give enemy quarterbacks a moment's peace, and an amazing statistic about both is that Jones and Dean ran intercepted passes back for touchdowns last season. Now that's what you call playing "side-line-to-sideline" defense!

Inside at the tackle spots, the Chargers have yet another outstanding duo in Gary (Big Hands) Johnson and Louie (Big EVERYTHING) Kelcher. The 280-pound Kelcher, who wears a size 16-AAA shoe that George Washington could have used to cross the Delaware, is one of the league's premier down linemen, named to the AFC squad for the last Pro Bowl.

The foremost reserves up front are Charles DeJurnett, who can play tackle and end, along with flankman John Lee. DeJurnett and Lee are three-year pros with the experience to fill in briefly, but it's questionable if they could hack it over the long haul if one of the regulars in the front wall should sustain an injury.

The only aspect of the Chargers' defense that has to be labeled suspect is the linebacking. Until the Chargers resolve this shortcoming, their defense won't be completely air-tight. Other AFC teams like Denver, Pittsburgh and Oakland have clearly demonstrated the "key" to a great defense is superb linebacking. And that's a plateau San Diego may never reach unless their 'backers put forth a consistent effort.

1977 LEADERS				
PASS	A/C	INT	YDS	TD
Harris	211/109	11	1240	5
Fouts	109/69	6	869	4
REC	NO	YDS	AVG	TD
Young	48	423	8.8	0
Joiner	35	542	15.5	6
INT	NO	YDS	AVG	TD
Fuller	5	61	12.2	0
Stringert	4	64	16.0	0
RUSH	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
Young	157	543	3.5	4
Woods	118	405	3.4	1
PUNT	NO	YDS	AVG	BK
West	72	2707	37.6	3
SCORE	TD	EP/MA	FG/MA	PTS
Benirschke	0	21/25	17/23	72
Joiner	6	0/0	0/0	36

Holding forth at the outside linebacking spots are Woody Lowe and Don Goode, both hard hitting young defenders, while stationed in the middle is Tom Graham, a seven-year veteran. This trio played together for the first time last season, so it seems reasonable to assume they should be improved this year because of that experience.

1977 Regular Season Statistics		
	CHARGERS	OPP
FIRST DOWNS	235	228
NET RUSH	1761	1927
Avg Per Game	125.8	137.6
NET PASS	2244	1725
Att/Comp	369/206	330/172
Had Int	20	21
Avg Per Game	160.3	123.3
PUNTS/AVG	73/37.1	76/40.6
Punts Return/Yds	46/521	40/378
Avg Per Game	11.3	9.5
KICKOFF-RET/YDS	39/734	47/952
Avg Per Return	18.8	20.3
FUMBLES/LOST	29/11	28/10
FIELD GOALS	17/23	8/13
PATS	21/25	25/26
TOTAL POINTS	222	205

Or at least that's what the Chargers most fervently hope, because depth at linebacker is average at best. The foremost reserves are Bob Horn, Rick Middleton and Ray Preston, but the only one with starting potential is Horn, an aggressive "hitter" who could challenge for the regular job as middle 'backer.

Aided-and-abetted by the savage pass

San Diego Chargers 1978 Veteran Roster										GAMES
NO	NAME	POS	HT	WT	AGE	YR	COLLEGE	IN '77		
64	Aiu, Charles	G	6-2	254	24	3	Hawaii	14		
35	Barnes, Lawrence	RB	5-11	220	24	2	Tennessee St	5		
37	Bauer, Hank	RB	5-10	195	24	2	Cal Lutheran	13		
6	Benirschke, Rolf	K	6-0	165	23	2	UC Davis	14		
65	Brown, Booker	T	6-2	257	26	3	USC	6		
46	Colbert, Danny	CB	5-11	176	28	4	Tulsa	0		
82	Curran, Pat	TE	6-3	238	33	10	Lakeland, Wisc	14		
71	Dean, Fred	DE	6-3	228	26	4	Louisiana Tech	11		
73	DeJurnett, Charles	DT	6-4	270	26	3	San Jose St	11		
87	Dorsey, Larry	WR	6-1	195	25	3	Tennessee St	13		
48	Dove, Jerome	CB	6-0	186	25	2	Colorado St	14		
21	Duren, Clarence	S	6-1	190	28	6	California	14		
14	Fouts, Dan	QB	6-3	204	27	6	Oregon	4		
42	Fuller, Mike	S	5-9	188	25	4	Auburn	14		
50	Goode, Don	LB	6-2	225	27	5	Kansas	14		
58	Graham, Tom	LB	6-2	235	28	7	Oregon	12		
12	Harris, James	QB	6-4	217	31	9	Grambling	9		
55	Horn, Bob	LB	6-3	237	24	3	Oregon St	14		
11	Jeffrey, Neal	QB	6-0	180	26	3	Baylor	0		
79	Johnson, Gary	DT	6-2	254	26	4	Grambling	14		
18	Joiner, Charlie	WR	5-11	188	31	10	Grambling	14		
68	Jones, Leroy	DE	6-8	265	28	3	Norfolk State	14		
74	Kelcher, Louie	DT	6-5	282	25	4	SMU	12		
84	Klein, Bob	TE	6-5	245	31	10	USC	12		
51	Lowe, Woodrow	LB	6-0	227	24	3	Alabama	14		
62	Macek, Don	G	6-3	253	24	3	Boston College	14		
41	Matthews, Bo	RB	6-4	230	27	5	Colorado	12		
89	McDonald, Dwight	WR	6-2	187	27	4	San Diego St	12		
57	Middleton, Rick	LB	6-2	228	27	5	Ohio State	14		
19	Munson, Bill	QB	6-2	205	37	15	Utah State	4		
10	Olander, Cliff	P-QB	6-5	196	23	2	New Mexico St	5		
85	Owens, Artie	WR	5-10	174	25	3	West Virginia	11		
53	Perretta, Ralph	C	6-2	250	25	4	Purdue	14		
52	Preston, Ray	LB	6-0	215	24	3	Syracuse	11		
20	Rodgers, Johnny	WR-RB	5-10	180	27	2	Nebraska	11		
56	Rush, Bob	C	6-5	258	23	2	Memphis State	14		
44	Shaw, Pete	S	5-10	184	24	2	Northwestern	14		
66	Shields, Billy	T	6-7	254	25	4	Georgia Tech	10		
45	Stringert, Hal	CB	5-11	185	26	4	Hawaii	14		
24	Washington, Joe	RB	5-10	182	25	3	Oklahoma	13		
70	Washington, Russ	T	6-7	290	32	11	Missouri	14		
80	West, Jeff	P-TE	6-3	211	25	4	Cincinnati	14		
63	Wilkerson, Doug	G	6-3	257	31	9	No Carolina Cent	14		
40	Williams, Clarence	RB	5-9	188	23	2	So Carolina	14		
20	Williams, Mike	CB	5-10	180	25	4	Louisiana St	10		
33	Woods, Don	RB	6-1	209	27	5	New Mexico	14		
34	Young, Rickey	RB	6-2	198	25	4	Jackson State	14		

rush of the defensive line, the Chargers' secondary gang did enough ball-hawking to help the team lead the AFC in pass defense in '77. And there's no let-up in sight for enemy passers since the majority of the defenders prowling the San Diego secondary are of the young-ish variety and determined to improve with experience.

The pacesetter in the deep zones is strong safety Mike Fuller, who led the team last season in pass interceptions (five) and punt returns (28 for 12.9 yard average, 88-yard scoring run). Opposite him at free safety is Clarence Duren, a steady veteran who added four aerial thefts in '77, and that combination gives the Chargers one of the best safety duos in the AFC.

Stationed at the corners are Mike Williams and Hal Stringert, who teamed up for seven interceptions last season. Williams and Stringert get picked on a lot by enemy passers because their counterparts at safety (Fuller and Duren) are so hard to throw against, but they come up with enough big plays to make their presence felt.

The Chargers are confident reserve strength in the deep zones is adequate, with Pete Shaw and Jerome Dove on call. But unless this is some kind of "new" math, Shaw and Dove only add up to two players, and there're four positions in the secondary that need protecting. So, call the depth here (once again!) a little thin.

San Diego's kicking game is in good shape, and the top hand (or should that be "top foot") is placement specialist Rolf Benirschke, who converted 21 PATs and 17 field goals in '77. Benirschke will enter this season with a shot at setting a record for most consecutive field goals—he has 12, the league record is 16. Punting duties are taken care of by Jeff West, also a part-timer at tight end, who averaged 37.6 yards on 72 boots a year ago.

**GAMEPLAN CONCLUSION:** Right off the bat, we'd like to say that if this does turn out to be Tommy Prothro's last year of coaching, we want to wish him the best of luck. As a college grid skipper at Oregon State and UCLA, then in the NFL with the LA Rams and San Diego, Prothro has always been—if you'll pardon the triteness—a gentleman and a scholar. And one helluva football coach! From a sentimental standpoint, it would be nice to say the Chargers will send their coach out on a glorious note. But, unfortunately, harsh reality suggests otherwise, with Oakland and Denver standing between San Diego and the AFC West title. On offense, the Chargers are in pretty fair shape overall, and this unit would take on a real glow if the situation at quarterback stabilizes. Fouts inked a new five-year contract earlier this year, which insures his future in San Diego for awhile, and as he develops as a steady pro quarterback the offense will develop and grow around him. With receivers like Joiner, "Johnny R. Superstar," Dorsey and the tight end duo (Klein and Curran), the passing attack is bound to be prolific. The rushing attack will come along nicely too, if the Chargers can uncover an outside threat to take some of the heat off their inside running game. Like several other areas of this team, the Charger offensive

line is solid as regards starting personnel, but the reserve situation ranges from questionable to MAY-DAY! That lack of depth problem is one that crops up in almost every area on defense, and should too many regulars go down with injuries, it could mean the downfall of this unit. That's especially true if the injury bugaboo hits in the defensive line or secondary. Coach Prothro's fifth, and

possibly last, edition of Chargers is clearly the best he's had since arriving in San Diego. Provided his team manages to avoid too many injuries they could win anywhere from 8 to 10 games under the NFL's newly expanded 16-game regular season format. But even that much improvement will leave them short of overtaking Oakland in the AFC West title race.

# Seattle Seahawks

## 1978 Schedule

Sep 3	SAN DIEGO
Sep 10	at Pittsburgh
Sep 17	at New York Jets
Sep 24	DETROIT
Oct 1	at Denver
Oct 8	MINNESOTA
Oct 15	at Green Bay
Oct 22	OAKLAND
Oct 29	DENVER
Nov 5	at Chicago
Nov 12	BALTIMORE
Nov 19	at Kansas City
Nov 26	at Oakland
Dec 3	CLEVELAND
Dec 10	at San Diego
Dec 17	KANSAS CITY

(5-9-0)

He's one mighty cool customer, this Jack Patera, head coach of the Seahawks. When asked for an appraisal of his team's performance last season—a year that saw the fledgling Seahawks hang up a 5-9 record—Patera calmly replied:

"No, I don't think we exceeded our expectations. We go into every game believing we can win . . . (and) when we begin developing more consistency, we will be a contending team."

That seems like some pretty highfalutin' talk, wouldn't you agree, coming from a coach whose team is entering its third year of NFL existence? But such has been the prevailing philosophy in Seattle since the club's founding days in '76. And that think-positive attitude has paid off with a tremendous improvement by the Seahawks in just a very short time.

Seahawks	1977 Results	Opp
14	Baltimore	29
20	at Cincinnati	42
13	Denver	24
0	at New England	31
30	Tampa Bay	23
13	at Miami	31
56	Buffalo	17
7	at Oakland	44
17	at N.Y. Jets	0
10	Houston	22
28	San Diego	30
20	at Pittsburgh	30
34	at Kansas City	31
20	Cleveland	19

However, it's still a wee bit premature to classify the Seahawks as a "contending" team. Coach Patera hit the nail right on the head when he commented his team still lacked consistency, and while Seattle has the potential to log an even better won-lost mark this season, we doubt they will emerge as a title threat in the rugged AFC West.

"Denver is on the rise, and won't get any weaker," comments Patera, "Oakland has been solid for years, and I don't see them going downhill. San Diego appears to have overcome their defensive problems and will be better. That leaves us and Kansas City looking at three very good football teams."

Right again, Coach, we couldn't have said it better ourselves!

**OFFENSE:** One of the biggest things

## Seattle Seahawks Rookie Roster

(Listed in order of selection)

NAME	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
Simpson, Keith	DB	6-0	190	Memphis State
Butler, Keith	LB	6-2	212	Memphis State
Jury, Bob	DB	6-0	186	Pittsburgh
Bullard, Louis	T	6-7	250	Jackson State
Starks, Glenn	WR	6-3	200	Texas A & I
Harris, John	DB	6-2	192	Arizona State
Grimmett, Rich	T	6-8	265	Illinois
Stewart, Rob	WR	6-4	203	Lafayette
Halas, George	LB	6-2	229	Miami (Fla)
Bergerson, Jeff	RB	6-1	196	Lamar



Coach Patera has going for him in his quest to move up in the AFC West is a first-class offensive unit, one capable of putting points on the board either on the ground or through the air lanes. And when you recall that the Seahawks have only been around three years, it's really amazing how advanced their offense is.

Pulling the trigger on that potent attack is quarterback Jim Zorn, who tossed strikes on 104 of 251 aeriels and passed for 16 touchdowns last season. Zorn still has a tendency to throw the ball up for grabs when pressured, but he's young enough to overcome that flaw and seems destined for a fine pro career.

Providing depth at the signal calling spot is promising third-year pro Steve Myer, who completed 53% of his passes (70-130) for 729 yards and six TDs last season. Myer was the quarterback a year ago when Seattle scored its biggest victory ever, a 56-17 thrashing of the Buffalo Bills. He's got the credentials to develop into a solid field general.

When the Seattle quarterbacks crank up their throwing arms, the guy they usually look for is wide receiver Steve Largent, who rocketed for 643 yards and 10 touchdowns on 33 receptions last season. Largent is an elusive third-year pro originally acquired in a '76 trade with the Houston Oilers, and he's rapidly developing into one of the league's most dangerous long-distance threats.

Veteran Sam McCullum is stationed at the other wide receiver, and while he caught only nine passes during the '77 campaign, he averaged a sizzling 22.0 yards per reception. Challenging for starting duties will be Duke Ferguson and Steve Raible. The speedy Ferguson raced for 374 yards and two TDs on 19 catches last season, and he'll claim a regular job if he can avoid injuries.

Operating at the tight end spot is Ron Howard, who rumbled for 177 yards on 17 receptions last season. Howard's a 240-pound tank who blocks with plenty of thump but needs some work on his receiving. Backing him up is John Sawyer, who had 10 catches in '77.

The big noisemaker in the rushing attack is hard-running Sherman Smith, who bolted for 763 yards and four touchdowns on 163 carries last season. Smith is a 230-pounder who looks like a locomotive when he gets up a full head of steam. He runs with the reckless abandon of a guy determined to crack the 1,000-yard rushing plateau—which is just fine so far as the Seattle coaching staff is concerned!

Another bullish-type runner, Don Testerman (6-2, 235) is the other starting ball toter, and a year ago he blasted for 459 yards on 119 sorties. Testerman also showed his versatility in '77 when he finished second on the team with 31 pass receptions (four scoring catches). But the Seahawks sure could use a scatback-type to give their rushing attack an outside threat.

Heir apparant to that role is second-year pro Al Hunter, who saw only limited action last year after signing late with the Seahawks, but still averaged 5.5 yards on 32 rushing attempts. Hunter paced the team in kickoff returns (a 22.5 yard average) in '77, and he'll be called upon more often to add some speed at running

back in the future.

Other veteran running backs on hand are six-year pro Ed Marinaro, an ex-Jet and Viking acquired in a trade late last season, and David Sims. The 220-pound Sims is another of those "big" runners the Seahawks have such an abundance of, and he demonstrated his ball toting prowess as a rookie in '77, when he barreled for 369 yards (on 99 attempts) and scored five touchdowns.

As it is with most any young NFL team like the Seahawks, the area of their offense that needs the most work is the front wall. It can sometimes take years to assemble a solid line, and though Seattle is progressing steadily in that respect, the crew up front still looks a little undermanned to turn in a consistent performance.

Over the ball at center is third-year pro Art Kuehn, with back-up help from

Geoff Reece and John Yarno, and you can rate this position as fairly solid. Filling the guard holes are Tom Lynch and Ron Coder, good young prospects who need to improve their quickness so they can pull out faster on running plays to the outside. Supplying depth at guard are ex-Chicago Bear regular Bob Newton and Gordon Jolley, a seven-year veteran also capable of helping out at tackle.

The regular tackles are Norm Evans and Nick Bebout, good straight-ahead blockers, but lacking in quickness. Certain to challenge for a starting job at tackle is Steve August, the team's No. 1 pick in last year's rookie draft and a great young prospect.

**DEFENSE:** Himself a former star line-backer with several NFL teams, Coach Patera knows all too well that you can't win championships in pro football without a stout-hearted defense. He

Seattle Seahawks 1978 Veteran Roster

NO	NAME	POS	HT	WT	AGE	YR	COLLEGE	GAMES
								IN '77
12	Adkins, Sam	QB	6-2	214	22	2	Wichita State	1
46	Adzick, George (1)	S	6-3	199	23	1	Minnesota	0
76	August, Steve	T	6-5	254	23	2	Tulsa	6
27	Beamon, Autry	S	6-1	190	24	4	East Texas St	14
63	Bebout, Nick	T	6-5	260	26	6	Wyoming	12
58	Beeson, Terry	LB	6-3	240	22	2	Kansas	14
31	Benjamin, Tony	RB	6-3	225	22	2	Duke	6
68	Boyd, Dennis	DT	6-6	255	22	2	Oregon State	14
22	Brown, Dave	CB	6-1	190	25	4	Michigan	14
60	Coder, Ron	GB	6-4	250	23	3	Penn State	14
52	Coffield, Randy (1)	LB	6-3	215	24	2	Florida State	0
57	Cronan, Peter	LB	6-2	238	23	2	Boston College	14
25	Dufek, Don	S	6-0	195	23	3	Michigan	13
74	East, Ron	DT	6-4	248	34	11	Montana State	14
73	Evans, Norm	T	6-5	250	35	14	TCU	13
89	Ferguson, Duke	WR	6-1	193	24	2	San Diego St	13
36	Geddes, Ken	LB	6-3	235	30	8	Nebraska	14
56	Green, Sammy	LB	6-2	230	23	3	Florida	14
77	Harris, Richard	DE	6-5	258	30	8	Grambling	14
62	Hodges, Ruben (1)	DE	6-5	260	24	1	Miss Valley	0
87	Howard, Ron	TE	6-4	240	27	5	Seattle	12
24	Hunter, Al	RB	5-11	195	23	2	Notre Dame	12
64	Jolley, Gordon	T	6-5	245	28	7	Utah	13
79	Jones, Horace	DE	6-4	260	28	7	Louisville	1
53	Jones, Mike	LB	6-3	224	23	2	Jackson St	12
54	Kuehn, Art	C	6-3	255	25	3	UCLA	14
80	Largent, Steve	WR	5-11	184	23	3	Tulsa	14
3	Leyboldt, John	K	6-2	230	31	8	No College	13
23	Long, Doug	S	5-11	189	22	1	Whitworth	1
70	Lurtsema, Bob	DT	6-6	250	36	12	W'stern Michigan	14
61	Lynch, Tom	G	6-5	260	22	2	Boston College	14
49	Marinaro, Ed	RB	6-2	207	27	7	Cornell	1
50	Martin, Amos	LB	6-3	228	29	6	Louisville	2
84	McCullum, Sam	WR	6-2	203	25	5	Montana State	13
41	McMillan, Eddie	CB	6-0	190	26	6	Florida State	14
59	McShane, Charlie	LB	6-3	230	24	2	Cal Lutheran	14
16	Myer, Steve	QB	6-2	188	23	3	New Mexico	7
78	Newton, Bob	G	6-5	260	28	8	Nebraska	13
71	Niehaus, Steve	DE	6-4	255	23	3	Notre Dame	8
20	Preece, Steve	S	6-1	195	31	10	Oregon State	14
83	Raible, Steve	WR	6-2	195	23	3	Georgia Tech	14
82	Rayhle, Fred	TE	6-5	225	23	1	Tenn-Chattanooga	2
55	Reece, Geoff	C	6-4	247	25	3	Washington, St	3
75	Roche, Alden	DE	6-4	255	32	9	Southern	13
66	Sandifer, Bill	DT	6-6	260	26	4	UCLA	1
81	Sawyer, John	TE	6-2	230	24	4	S'thern Miss	14
35	Sims, David	RB	6-3	216	22	2	Georgia Tech	14
47	Smith, Sherman	RB	6-4	225	23	3	Miami (O)	14
42	Testerman, Don	RB	6-2	230	25	3	Clemson	14
67	Van Valkenberg, C	T	6-5	240	23	1	Washington	0
18	Weaver, Herman	P	6-4	210	29	9	Tennessees	13
38	Webster, Cornell	S	6-0	180	23	2	Tulsa	14
51	Yarno, John	C	6-5	251	23	2	Idaho	10
10	Zorn, Jim	QB	6-2	200	24	3	Cal Poly (Pomona)	10

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would be the first to admit his team's defensive unit has a way to go yet before they reach that plateau.

"It wasn't hard to notice improvement in our defense last season," Patera says, "because there was an awful lot of room for it."

To that we might add there still remains a lot of room for improvement before the Seattle defense will be stronger. The front four is certain to be the area undergoing the most sweeping revision. Without a solid first-line-of-defense, you're dead, right from the start, and the Seahawks were positively alarmed at the way opponents ran through and passed over the team's front four last season.

More or less protecting the line flanks are Richard Harris and Alden Roche, battle-tested war horses in their seventh and ninth pro seasons, respectively. Neither will ever be called the most fearsome pass rusher around. The Seahawks might be better off with Steve Niehaus, a former regular at tackle, moving out to fill one of the flank spots.

Niehaus is a mobile 265-pounder who turned in a lackluster performance in '77, partly due to injuries and partly due to shifting from one position to another. If Niehaus settles at a defensive end spot, which seems his destiny, he could develop into the kind of pass rusher NFL quarterbacks have nightmares about.

Inside at the tackle holes are Ron East (11-year pro) and Bob Lurtsema (12 years), another pair of veterans nearing the end of the line. Should either need a breather, first to get the call will be Dennis Boyd, a promising young bull (6-6, 265) who made his mark with the special teams last season as a rookie.

The strongest single area on defense is at linebacker, where there's solid starting personnel and pretty fair depth. But that shouldn't surprise you since we mentioned earlier that Coach Patera used to be a linebacker, and a darned good one, to boot! So he knows what to look for in the way of prospects at this position.

Backing up the middle of the line is Terry Beeson, a bone-jarring tackler named to the league's all-rookie team in '77. But unless he stays on his toes, Beeson is in danger of losing the starting job to Peter Cronan, another second-year pro with glowing potential.

Sammy Green holds forth at strong side 'backer, and when you watch him play, it's easy to see how he earned his nickname: "Odd-Job." You remember Odd-Job, the Oriental killer with the steel-brimmed top hat in the James Bond (Goldfinger) movie. 'Cause just like Odd-Job in the movie, when Green hits 'em, they no gette uppe for long time, ah-so!

Opposite him at weak side linebacker is ex-LA Ram Ken Geddes, a steady seven-year veteran, with support from Mike Jones and Charles McShane. Jones and McShane are both in their second pro season, and while the potential is there, it might be a little early to expect either to fill in on a regular basis.

The secondary is another area of the defense that's in fairly good shape, although reserve strength is thin, and a major outbreak of injuries would be fatal. Enemy passers riddled the Seahawks for 21 scoring arials in '77, but the biggest problem was the pathetic pass

1977 LEADERS					
PASS	A/C	INT	YDS	TD	
Zorn	251/104	19	1683	16	
Myer	130/70	12	729	6	
REC	NO	YDS	AVG	TD	
Largent	33	643	19.4	10	
Testerman	31	219	7.0	4	
INT	NO	YDS	AVG	TD	
Beamon	6	36	6.0	0	
McMillan	4	157	39.2	0	
RUSH	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD	
Smith	163	763	4.7	4	
Testerman	119	459	3.8	1	
PUNT	NO	YDS	AVG	BK	
Weaver	58	2293	39.5	4	
Engles	4	137	34.3	0	
SCORE	TD	EP/MA	FG/MA	PTS	
Largent	10	0/0	0/0	60	
Leyboldt	0	33/37	9/18	60	

## Computer Science Can It Win For You? See Page 5

rush of the team's defensive line.

Provided the front four musters up a stronger rush, the passing defense should improve this season because the secondary sure looks capable of holding up their end of the deal with some ball-hawking play. Set at the cornerbacks are David Brown and Eddie McMillan, who teamed up for eight pass interceptions last season. Brown is a big-play guy who ran one pass theft back for a touchdown in '77, but he'll have to curb his tendency to get caught out of position so often. Depth at cornerback consists of lightly-experienced Cornell Webster, which harks back to what we said earlier about the lack of proven reserves in the secondary.

Steve Preece (free) and Autry Beamon (strong) man the safety spots. Beamon led the team with six pass interceptions in '77 and Preece added four more, but they also got "burned" that many times and more besides! The top reserve at safety is Don Dufek, a pugnacious three-year pro about ripe enough to claim a starting spot in the secondary.

Punting duties for the Seahawks are handled by ex-Detroit Lion Herman (Thunder Foot) Weaver, who boomed 58 for a 39.5 yard average in '77. His kicking counterpart, placement specialist John Leyboldt, hit on 33 of 37 PATs and nine field goals last season. Unless he can boost his three-point production, Leyboldt may find himself out of a job.

**GAMEPLAN CONCLUSION: Kudos**

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1977 Regular Season Statistics

	SEAHAWKS	OPP
FIRST DOWNS	251	295
NET RUSH	1964	2485
Avg Per Game	140.2	177.5
NET PASS	2328	2333
Att/Comp	387/175	349/196
Had Int	32	25
Avg Per Game	166.2	166.6
PUNTS/AVG	64/37.9	54/35.9
Punts Return/Yds	31/217	41/372
Avg per Return	7.0	9.0
KICKOFF-RET/YDS	73/1502	50/1240
Avg Per Return	20.5	24.8
FUMBLES/LOST	26/13	20/11
FIELD GOALS	9/18	23/31
PATS	33/37	42/43
TOTAL POINTS	282	373

are in order for the entire Seattle organization after their banner performance last season, when they numbered among their victims "establishment" teams like Buffalo (56-17), the NY Jets (17-0), Kansas City (34-31) and Cleveland (20-19). Granted, none of those teams are exactly Super Bowl material, but the Seahawks are in a situation where they have to learn how to walk before trying to run. They've already learned quite a bit in a surprisingly short time, which is a credit to the hard work and dedication of Coach Patera and his staff. It's never easy to build a respectable team in the NFL, especially when it's an expansion team that has to be built from the ground up. But Patera has done a whale of a job with the Seahawks, especially on offense, where he and his assistants have molded together an explosive attack. In Jim Zorn, Steve Largent, Sherman Smith and Duke Ferguson, the Seahawks have the ingredients for a potent, balanced attack. The obvious key to getting that attack untracked is the offensive line, which is looking better all the time with young stalwarts like Lynch, Coder and August, but still lacks the overall depth to do the job over the long haul. Don't forget, it's a sixteen-game regular season in '78, and without quality reserve strength, a team will start running out of gas eventually. This rule-of-thumb also applies to Seattle's defensive unit, which has a handful of quality players but very little in reserve. The defensive line is especially undernourished, although prospects there would be brightened if tackle/end Niehaus were to play back to his pre-injury form when he was one of the best young defenders around. At linebacker and in the secondary, the Seahawks are pretty solid in the way of starting personnel, but after that, pickin's get mighty slim. Embarking on their third year in the NFL, Coach Patera's feisty young Seahawks are a team dressed to kill, with a splashy offense that's always good for a lot of fireworks. But you can drape the defense in black crepe, because this unit will undermine any attempts at big improvement by Seattle this season. Oh, there's a good chance the Seahawks can bolster their win total to six or seven, and a break-even mark (8-8) is also possible if the defense takes shape. But, as for being a contender in the AFC West, the Seahawks are in way over their collective heads.

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# Kansas City Chiefs

(2-12-0)

Make no mistake about it. Lamar Hunt, financial baron and owner of the KC Chiefs, simply cannot abide being a loser. It runs contrary to the man's very nature—like asking Ralph Nader to drive a Corvair. Which explains why Hunt went through sheer hell, not to mention two head coaches (Paul Wiggin and Tom Bettis), last season when his once-proud Chiefs stumbled home with a 2-12 mark that tied them with the lowly Tampa Bay Bucs for the worst record in the NFL.

"We were 2-12 and Denver was 12-2," Hunt reflects, "but anyone who saw our game with Denver here (a 14-7 loss) knows we're a lot closer than that."

Exit Wiggin and Bettis as coaches, enter Marv Levy, an import from the Canadian pro league where he spent the past five years guiding the fortunes of the Montreal Alouettes. During his stint north of the border, Levy's team twice captured the Grey Cup (the CFL's Super Bowl), but he has no delusions of the same kind of success in his first year in Kansas City.

"They didn't say to me that they expected to be a contender in a year," Levy said upon accepting the job in KC, "they said they expected improvement. I think that's fair."

All things considered, Levy does have a very good shot at getting the troubled Chiefs back on the right track in his first year at the helm. No one can deny that, as far as personnel is concerned, the Chiefs are hurting in several areas, but this is far from a destitute ball club.

"When you're 2-12, things usually start to steamroller on you and everything goes bad," Levy comments, "and I would hope that the talent here is better than the record."

**OFFENSE:** Certain to be one of the new skipper's first priorities is to bolster an attack that, while fairly productive last season, was plagued by turnovers and mental errors. And the first order of business will be to resolve the troublesome situation at quarterback that has hounded the Chiefs since the retirement of all-time great Lenny Dawson.

Once thought to be the fair-haired-boy at the signal calling spot, 10-year veteran Mike Livingston has repeatedly failed to fill the void as expected, and latest reports indicate his days in Kansas City may be numbered if the Chiefs can swing the right trade. A year ago, Livingston connected on only 143 of 282 passes (50.7%) for 1,823 yards, but even more distressing was his ratio of touchdown aeriels (9) compared to the number of interceptions (15) and to the number of sacks (30 for 285 yards).

Should the Chiefs decide to trade Livingston, the heir apparent at quarterback would be Tony Adams, a former WFL passing champion entering his third year with Kansas City. Last season, mostly in short relief roles, Adams tossed strikes on 47 of 92 aeriels (51.1%) for 691 yards, but he managed only two scoring passes while giving up 11 interceptions.

## 1978 Schedule

Sep 3	at Cincinnati
Sep 10	HOUSTON
Sep 17	at New York Giants
Sep 24	DENVER
Oct 1	at Buffalo
Oct 8	TAMPA BAY
Oct 15	at Oakland
Oct 22	CLEVELAND
Oct 29	at Pittsburgh
Nov 5	OAKLAND
Nov 12	at San Diego
Nov 19	SEATTLE
Nov 26	SAN DIEGO
Dec 3	BUFFALO
Dec 10	at Denver
Dec 17	at Seattle

The possibility exists that the Chiefs might try to make a deal for another quarterbacking prospect or pick one up in the college draft. But two problems arise there: A) established NFL signal callers are more scarce than the dodo bird; and B) rookie quarterbacks rarely, if ever, make the grade in their first year.

Leading the pass catching brigade is tight end Walter White, a three-year pro who paced the team last season in receptions (48), yardage (674) and scoring catches (5). White is a sure-handed receiver with great speed for his size, but unless he starts blocking with more authority, the Chiefs may move him to wide receiver.

In that event, the starting job at tight end may fall to Tony Samuels, a second-year man with good potential. Last season, Samuels nabbed 5 passes for 65 yards in brief stints at the tight end spot, and he was also a standout member of the special teams.

Blazing out of one wide receiving berth is Henry Marshall, who averaged an impressive 19.3 yards on 23 pass receptions and zipped under four scoring aeriels last season. Marshall has all the

Chiefs	1977 Results	Opp
17	at New England	21
7	San Diego	23
28	Oakland	37
7	at Denver	23
6	Baltimore	17
21	at San Diego	16
7	at Cleveland	44
20	Green Bay	10
27	at Chicago	28
7	Denver	14
20	at Houston	34
7	Cincinnati	27
31	Seattle	34
20	at Oakland	21

ear-marks of a dynamite long-distance threat, a commodity the Chiefs have lacked since Otis Taylor was in his prime.

Three-year pro Larry Brunson is stationed at the other wide receiver, and last season he caught 20 passes for 295 yards. Brunson's performance in '77 was off somewhat due to salary disputes with the team's front office, and unless matters improve, his starting job may be ceded to journeyman Charley Wade, acquired late last year.

Just like ol' man river, the top ball carrier for the Chiefs last season was nine-year stalwart Ed Podolak, who rolled along for 550 yards and five touchdowns on 133 rushing attempts. That was the fifth time in his pro career that tough Eddie has led the team in ground yardage, and provided he can bounce back from an injury that sidelined him late in the year, Podolak will spearhead KC's running game again this season.

Supplying the break-away threat in the rushing attack is Tony Reed, a second-year pro who scampered for 505 yards on 126 carries last season. Reed is a gifted ball totter who could supercharge the

## Kansas City Chiefs Rookie Roster

(Listed in order of selection)

NAME	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
Still, Art	DE	6-7	237	Kentucky
Hicks, Sylvester	DE	6-5	241	Tennessee St.
Spani, Gary	LB	6-2	207	Kansas State
Johnson, Danny	LB	6-2	218	Tennessee St.
Woods, Pete	QB	6-4	210	Missouri
McRae, Jerrold	WR	6-2	185	Tennessee St.
Carey, Dwight	DT	6-4	245	Texas-Arlington
Woods, Robert	KR	5-10	173	Grambling
Odom, Ricky	DB	6-0	179	Southern Cal.
Kellar, Bill	WR	6-0	180	Stanford
White, John Henry	RB	5-10	185	Louisiana Tech
Brown, Larry	T	6-5	248	Miami
Bryant, Earl	DE	6-7	260	Jackson St.
Milo, Ray	DB	6-1	173	New Mexico St.
Brock, Willie	C	6-3	247	Colorado

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Our top five choices Nov. 12-Nov. 26 ..... **WON 9** lost 5  
Our S.E.C. choices Sept. 17-Oct. 8 ..... **WON 3** lost 1  
Our Big Ten choices Oct. 29-Nov. 19 ..... **WON 3** lost 1  
Our Big Eight choices Sept. 17-Oct. 8 ..... **WON 3** lost 1  
Our Big Eight choices Nov. 5-Nov. 26 ..... **WON 3** lost 1  
Our Southwest Conf. choices Sept. 10-Nov. 19 ..... **WON 8** lost 3  
Our Southwest Conf. choices Oct. 8-Nov. 19 ..... **WON 6** lost 1  
Our Atlantic Coast Conf. choices Sept. 10-Oct. 8 ..... **WON 4** lost 0  
Our "Eastern Independent" choices Oct. 15-Nov. 19 ..... **WON 4** lost 2  
Our New Year's Day bowl selections won three of four.  
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team's ground game, but only if he can avoid injuries and curb his tendency to cough the ball up on fumbles.

The top reserve at running back is burly Mark Bailey, a 235-pounder who blasted for 266 yards on 66 sorties in '77. Also available are seven-year veteran John Brockington, an ex-Green Bay Packer great who rumbled for an additional 161 yards, and speedy Ted McKnight, who averaged a gaudy 6.7 yards per rushing attempt and led the team with a 25.4 yard average on 12 kickoff returns last season. Not to be forgotten, either, is ten-year pro MacArthur Lane, a powerful ball carrier who sat out most of the '77 campaign with an injury but is said to be completely mended.

Long a thorn in the side of KC's attack has been the offensive line, and unless Coach Levy can work a miracle with the crew up front, the lack of reliable blocking will continue to hinder the offense.

Snapping the ball is Jack Rudnay, an eight-year standout and former Pro Bowler who must rebound after an off year in '77 when he was hampered by injuries. Backing him up at center is Charlie Ane, entering his fourth NFL season.

The guard holes are plugged by Tom Condon and Charlie Getty, with reserve help from Tom Wickert and Bob Simmons, both of whom can also fill in at tackle. Man-mountain Jim Nicholson (6-6, 275) is stationed at one tackle, while opposite him is Matt Herkenhoff. Two players who missed last year with injuries (Rod Walters and Darius Helton) could help out in the front wall now that they've healed, but the Chiefs are still mighty thin in the offensive line.

**DEFENSE:** Horrendous. That's the only word to describe the performance turned in by KC's defensive unit last season, when opponents scored a staggering 42 touchdowns and chalked up 356.7 yards-per-game. And no matter how you cut it, prospects for this year aren't much better, especially since longtime linebacking stalwarts Willie (Sugar Bear) Lanier and Jim Lynch have retired.

The long returning starter at linebacker is 11-year pro Billy Andrews, a steady veteran, and that's good news. But the bad news is that Andrews is giving some thought to retirement himself, and if he goes through with those plans, the Chiefs will lose their entire linebacking crew in one fell swoop.

In alphabetical order, the other veterans at linebacker are Ray Burks, Jimbo Elrod, Thomas Howard, Otis Rodgers and Dave Rozumek. And if that line-up doesn't exactly dazzle you with its potential, you can see why we think the Chiefs are in for some serious problems at linebacker this season.

The defensive line isn't really in much better shape overall, and KC's front four will undoubtedly have trouble stopping enemy runners or putting much pressure on enemy passers. Pinching in from one end is Whitney Paul, who led the down linemen in tackles last season with 83, but managed a meager 3½ quarterback sacks.

The flank spot opposite Paul is shared by Wilbur Young and John Lohmeyer. Young was the top sacker on the team a

1977 LEADERS				
PASS	A/C	INT	YDS	TD
Livingston	282/143	15	1823	9
Adams	92/47	11	691	2
REC	NO	YDS	AVG	TD
White	48	674	14.0	5
Podolak	32	313	9.8	0
INT	NO	YDS	AVG	TD
Barbaro	8	165	20.6	1
Green	3	19	6.3	0
RUSH	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
Podolak	133	550	4.1	5
Reed	126	505	4.0	2
PUNT	NO	YDS	AVG	BK
Wilson	88	3510	39.9	5
SCORE	TD	EP/MA	FG/MA	PTS
Stenerud	0	27/28	8/18	51
Podolak	5	0/0	0/0	30
White	5	0/0	0/0	30

year ago with 5½, although he's had a number of run-ins with the team's front office and seems sure to be traded. Lohmeyer is a gutsy player with good

1977 Regular Season Statistics		
	CHIEFS	OPP
FIRST DOWNS	228	304
NET RUSH	1843	2971
Avg Per Game	131.6	211.8
NET PASS	2093	2022
Att/Comp	374/190	333/175
Had Int	26	21
Avg Per Game	149.5	144.4
PUNTS/AVG	89/39.4	63/41.0
Punts Return/Yds	36/236	50/702
Avg Per Return	6.6	14.0
KICKOFF-RET/YDS	63/1294	44/958
Avg Per Return	20.5	21.8
FUMBLES/LOST	32/31	39/23
FIELD GOALS	8/18	20/27
PATS	27/29	37/42
TOTAL POINTS	225	349

quickness, but his lack of size (6-4, 225) is a handicap.

Plugging the tackle holes are Cliff Frazier and Willie Lee, who recorded 82

Kansas City Chiefs 1978 Veteran Roster								GAMES
NO	NAME	POS	HT	WT	AGE	YR	COLLEGE	IN '77
11	Adams, Tony	QB	6-0	198	28	4	Utah State	14
53	Andrews, Billy	LB	6-0	220	33	12	S.E. Louisiana	14
56	Ane, Charlie	C	6-1	233	26	4	Michigan State	14
39	Bailey, Mark	RB	6-3	237	24	2	Cal St Long Beach	14
26	Barbaro, Gary	S	6-3	198	24	3	Nicholls State	14
85	Beckman, Ed	TE	6-4	223	23	2	Florida State	14
43	Brockington, John	RB	6-1	225	30	8	Ohio State	10
83	Brunson, Larry	WR	5-11	180	29	5	Colorado	11
59	Burks, Ray	LB	6-2	217	23	2	UCLA	13
37	Collier, Tim	CB	5-11	166	24	3	East Texas St	9
85	Condon, Tom	G	6-3	240	26	4	Boston College	14
40	Davis, Ricky	DB	6-0	180	25	4	Alabama	13
—	Edwards, Emmett	WR	6-1	190	26	3	Kansas	0
57	Elrod, Jimbo	LB	6-0	223	24	3	Oklahoma	14
71	Frazier, Cliff	DT	6-4	265	26	2	UCLA	14
77	Getty, Charlie	G	6-4	260	26	5	Penn State	14
46	Gray, Tim	S	6-1	200	26	4	Texas A&M	10
24	Green, Gary	CB	5-11	184	23	2	Baylor	11
62	Helton, Darius	G	6-2	260	24	2	No Carolina Cent	6
60	Herkenhoff, Matt	T	6-4	255	27	3	Minnesota	14
52	Howard, Thomas	LB	6-2	208	24	2	Texas Tech	13
42	Lane, MacArthur	RB	6-1	220	36	11	Utah State	3
78	Lee, Willie	DT	6-4	250	28	3	Bethune-Cookman	14
10	Livingston, Mike	QB	6-4	210	33	11	SMU	13
—	Lloyd, Jeff	DE	6-6	255	24	2	West Texas St	0
87	Lohmeyer, John	DE	6-4	229	27	5	Emporia St	14
22	McKnight, Ted	RB	6-1	203	24	2	Minnesota-Duluth	13
89	Marshall, Henry	WR	6-2	205	24	3	Missouri	14
21	Morgado, Arnold	RB	6-0	210	26	2	Hawaii	14
70	Nicholson, Jim	T	6-6	275	28	5	Michigan St	12
64	Paul, Whitney	DE	6-3	220	25	3	Colorado	14
14	Podolak, Ed	RB	6-1	200	31	10	Iowa	13
32	Reed, Tony	RB	5-11	197	23	2	Colorado	14
50	Rodgers, Otis	LB	6-3	228	24	1	Iowa State	0
55	Rozumek, Dave	LB	6-1	212	24	3	New Hampshire	14
58	Rudnay, Jack	C	6-3	240	31	9	Northwestern	14
81	Samuels, Tony	TE	6-4	229	24	2	Bethune-Cookman	14
73	Simmons, Bob	T	6-4	260	24	2	Texas	14
72	Simons, Keith	DT	6-3	254	24	3	Minnesota	14
—	Smith, John	RB	5-11	186	24	1	Boise State	0
3	Stenerud, Jan	K	6-2	187	35	12	Montana State	14
18	Thomas, Emmitt	CB	6-2	192	35	13	Bishop	14
6	Vitali, Mark	QB	6-5	209	23	2	Purdue	0
84	Wade, Charlie	WR	5-9	160	28	4	Tennessee St	5
76	Walters, Rod	G/T	6-3	258	24	2	Iowa	0
25	Wasson, Ricky	DB	5-9	163	23	2	SMU	14
88	White, Walter	TE	6-3	218	27	4	Maryland	13
66	Wickert, Tom	G/T	6-4	252	26	5	Washington St	5
44	Wilson, Jerrel	P	6-2	222	37	16	SMU	14
99	Young, Wilbur	DE	6-6	290	29	8	William Penn	13

and 67 tackles, respectively, last year. Frazier, entering his second pro season, and Lee (in his third) are both good young prospects, although their lack of consistency has been a problem to date. In reserve at tackle is Keith Simons, whose pro career has been a study in futility due to injuries.

Actually, it would be unfair to say that the KC defensive unit is weak in every area, because the secondary crew is a good one. Their biggest problem has been the fact that their teammates in the front line don't rush enemy passers well enough, which is the main reason the Chiefs gave up 15 scoring passes last season.

Heading up the crew in the deep zones is third-year pro Gary Barbaro, one of the best free safeties in the NFL. Last season, Barbaro tied an all-time league record when he returned an intercepted pass 102 yards for a touchdown, and altogether he picked off eight enemy aeriels to rank third in the AFC. Like they say about all the great defensive backs, the fiery Barbaro has a way of making things happen!

Popping enemy ball carriers and swatting down passes from the strong safety position is Tim Gray, who added two pass thefts and recovered four fumbles a year ago. Gray is a rugged 200-pounder picked up two years ago in a trade with the St. Louis Cardinals, and along with Barbaro, he gives the Chiefs one of the finest pair of young safeties around.

Stationed at one cornerback spot is third-year pro Tim Collier, who notched two interceptions last season and ran one of them back 100 yards for a touchdown. Oh, and just for the record, Collier's interception return along with that of Barbaro marked the first time in NFL history two players on the same team in the same season ran back passes over 100 yards for scores.

Promising Gary Green, voted to last year's all-rookie team, is set at the other cornerback. Green, KC's No. 1 pick in last year's college draft, is a ball-hawking defender with a bright pro future, and he showed his big play instincts in '77 when he swiped three enemy passes.

Supplying depth in the secondary are Emmitt Thomas, Ricky Wesson and Ricky Davis. Thomas, a veteran of 13 pro seasons, is a former All-Pro with a career total of 56 pass interceptions, and he needs just one more to tie Johnny Robinson for the team's career record in that department.

About the only phase of the game that the Chiefs always seem to excel at—come hell or high water—is kicking. The punting duties are handled by 15-year veteran Jerrell Wilson, who was mighty busy last season when he punted a team-record 88 times for a 39.9 yard average, ranking him third in the AFC.

The place kicker is Jan Stenerud, and a year ago he converted 8 of 18 field goals and 27 of 29 extra points for a total of 51 points. During his 11-year career, Stenerud has been accurate on 247 of 383 field goal attempts, giving him an impressive 64.4 percent accuracy rate.

**GAMEPLAN CONCLUSION:** First and foremost, we'd like to welcome Marv Levy to the NFL and wish him the best of

**Don't pay  
in July and pray  
in October.**

See Page 127

luck. We'll be especially pleased if he can inject some of the excitement of the Canadian pro league into the often drab game played around this neck of the woods. Coach Levy inherits a team that has been on a steady decline since its Super Bowl winning days (1970), but a team that is not without its bright spots, such as a fine crew on duty in the defensive secondary. Offensively, the most pressing need (outside of some studs to go in the front wall) is a steady performer at the all-important quarterbacking spot. It's quite possible that the change in coaching personnel may result in a steadier showing by Mike Livingston, who can rifle the ball with the best of 'em when he's of a mind to. If not, Livingston may be sent packing, and then it's anybody's guess who will end up the starting signal caller. The offensive unit is also in need of a better (as in more consistent) output from the running backs, especially young Tony Reed, who could be a holy terror if he doesn't let the ball get away from him so much. The pass catching corps is a good one, although Walter White just hasn't been able to cut

the mustard so far as a hard-blocking tight end. And that's the big reason why White, his pass catching prowess notwithstanding, hasn't made any all-star teams so far. That brings us to the defensive unit, and outside of the aforementioned crew of youthful ball hawks roaming the deep zones, this gang is in drastic need of a major overhaul. The retirement of linebackers Lynch and Lanier may not hurt all that much, since both were beginning to slow up a bit, although the defense will miss their veteran leadership the \$64 question of which players will ultimately wind up starting at the linebacking spots may not be answered until the opening kickoff of the '78 NFL season. About KC's defensive line, the less said the better. The Chiefs have a few players (like smallish end Lohmeyer) who give it their all every minute, which is always worth something in the long run. But there's just too many "ifs" and too little depth up front for KC to assemble a lead-proof front four, and opponents will probably rip through this gang at an alarming rate again this season. In his first tour of duty with the Chiefs, Coach Levy is likely to find out how the other half lives after his great success in the CFL. Granted, there's every reason to expect the Chiefs to improve on their won-lost mark, no great feat, however, when you remember the '77 disaster. But Kansas City fans will have to content themselves with another losing season while Levy picks up the pieces of an empire that crumbled and tries to put the grin back on the face of Lamar Hunt.



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- ☐ 4516 Tom Seaver
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# NATIONAL FOOTBALL CONFERENCE PREVIEW

Exactly one-half of the 14 teams that make up the National Football Conference will enter the '78 pro football season under a new head coach; which should make for a year full of surprises. But the biggest surprise of all would be if the defending Super Bowl champion Dallas Cowboys—the most awesome “force” this side of *Star Wars*—fail to extend their title reign in the NFC.

It's talent, talent and more talent that Coach Tom Landry has at his disposal in Dallas, the kind of offensive and defensive might that will enable the Cowboys to stay on top in the NFL East. The Cowpokes also have an excellent shot at winning their third consecutive National Conference playoff title and, with it, a berth opposite the AFC representative in Super Bowl XIII.

Believe-it-or-not, we favor the resurgent Philadelphia Eagles to finish second in the NFC East. Coach Dick Vermeil has a solid nucleus on offense (QB Jaworski, WR Harold Carmichael) and on defense (MLB Bergey, DT Manny Sistrunk, SS Randy Logan). That talent, plus Philly's usual 100 percent effort, should enable the Eagles to hold off the rest of the pack in the balanced NFC East.

Led by new skipper Jack Pardee—former boss man with the Chicago Bears—the ageless Washington Redskins will finish third in the division. But not without a struggle from the St. Louis Cardinals, under rookie coach Bud Wilkinson, and the New York Giants, led by Coach John McVay. If the Cards get a stronger defensive performance and the Giants bolster their punchless offense, these two teams could be real “sleepers” in the NFC East race.

Another team of seemingly ageless wonders, the Minnesota Vikings, should extend their title reign in the NFC Central. Although, as Coach Bud Grant's gridders discovered last year, it's getting a little tougher every season for them to stay on top in their division.

Picking the number two team in the “Black-and-Blue” division is a lot harder, because we see a real dog-fight between the Chicago Bears (new coach Neill Armstrong) and the Detroit Lions (new skipper Monte Clark). Because of last year's performance when the Windy City gridders went to the NFC playoffs as a Wild Card entry, we tend to go with the Bears. But, only if star running back Walter Payton recovers from an unfortunate leg injury sustained earlier this year while taking part in one of those silly Superstar shows made for television. If not, keep an eye on the up-and-coming

Lions to nose into second spot, mainly on the strength of their rugged defensive unit.

Bringing up the rear in the NFC Central will be the Green Bay Packers and the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, fourth and fifth, respectively. Between them last season, Coach Bart Starr's Packers and Coach John McKay's Bucs won a grand total of six games. So you have to believe both teams are looking forward to the NFL's new 16-game scheduling format since it will give each team a chance to notch a few extra victories.

Moving West, the always-potent Los Angeles Rams have a new, old coach in George Allen, back in LA after a highly successful stint with the Washington Redskins. And you can just bet ol' George's eyes light up everytime he looks at the LA Rams team he inherits. The club that should present the Dallas Cowboys with their stiffest challenge for the National Conference title.

Coach Leeman Bennett's resurgent Atlanta Falcons—coming off one of their best years ever in '77—are destined for second place in the NFC West. But, there's no way of telling how far this team might go if the offensive unit starts packing more punch.

Taking the reins for the San Francisco 49ers is Pete McCulley—and if he and team GM Joe Thomas hit it off as well as expected—the Niners could wipe out the memory of last year's 5-9 record. How-

ever, we have to think the “best days” are still a few years down the road for the 49ers. Oh, and trailing the pack in the NFC West will be the New Orleans Saints, with a new head coach in Dick Nolan. A team with good talent but enough internal problems to keep them from being much more than a “spoiler” in the division.

In the NFC post-season playoffs, the Dallas Cowboys (East) and Los Angeles Rams (West) should “back into” their respective division titles. And in the Central, the Minnesota Vikings should cling to the top spot, but not without a struggle. With two Wild Card berths available in the National Conference this year, there's a long list of hopefuls including (in no special order): Chicago, Detroit, Philadelphia, Atlanta, San Francisco and Washington. And don't overlook the St. Louis Cardinals either, if having a “living legend” for a head coach can make a big difference.

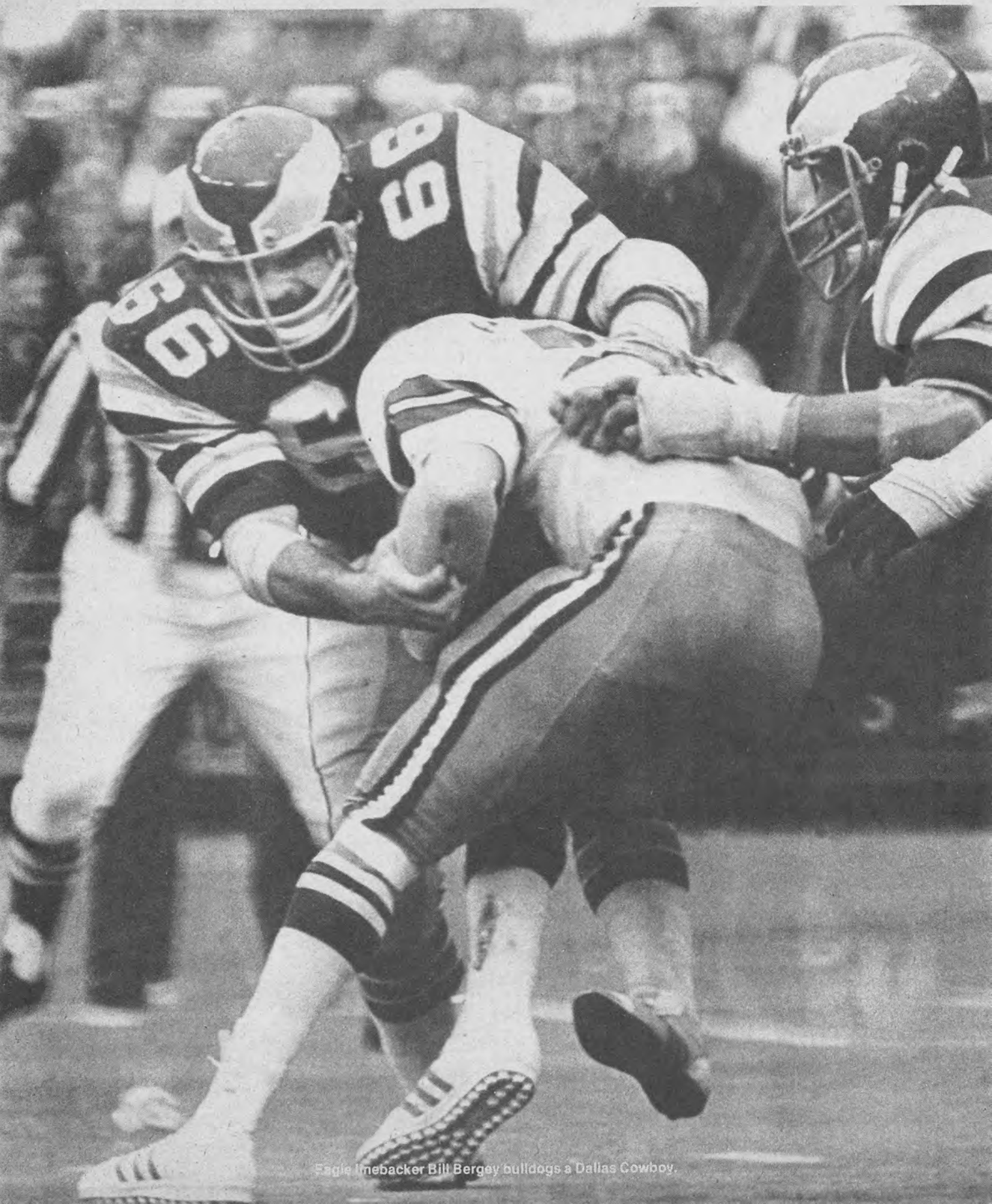
So, all-in-all, it should be a dandy year for playoff competition, but we expect this season's NFC title game—as it has so often in the past—will pit the Los Angeles Rams and Dallas Cowboys. A no-holds-barred donnybrook we expect Coach Landry's team to win (by seven points) on their way to Super Bowl XIII in Miami's Orange Bowl on January 21, 1979. And for a complete forecast of that titanic battle, see our 1979 SUPER BOWL PREVIEW on page 13.



Dallas defenders close in on Seattle's Sherman Smith.



# NFC EAST



Eagle linebacker Bill Bergey bulldogs a Dallas Cowboy.

# Dallas Cowboys

(12-2-0)

It was scary, the way Coach Tom Landry's Cowboys marched to the NFL championship last season, like watching one of those Japanese science fiction movies where Godzilla was stomping along toward Tokyo, and no tanks, rockets or nuclear bombs were going to stop him. A feeling similar to the one you had while watching the '77 Cowboys methodically drive to a league title, making the whole business look so easy it was... like we said, it was scary!

"Dynasty" is the first word that springs to mind when looking at this current edition of Cowboys, which may be the finest team Coach Landry has guided in his 18 years at the Dallas helm. And when you consider the venerable Mr. Landry is the fifth winningest coach in NFL history (152-95-6), you know he's had some pretty classy teams in the past with which to compare his present club.

"Some of my other teams had more experience," comments Landry, "but none had more individual talent (and) none were so fast."

In the past 11 years only once (1974) have the Cowboys failed to make the post-season playoffs, and twice they have won Super Bowl titles ('72, '78). Provided this club continues to play with the tremendous intensity that sparked the Cowboys to their last league championship, they could very well end up playing in Super Bowl XIII (in Miami's Orange Bowl) come next January.

**OFFENSE:** Piloting a high-octane offensive unit, which thundered for 343.7 yards-per-game and scored 39 touchdowns last year, is 10-year veteran Roger Staubach. Despite a series of nagging injuries in '77, Staubach passed for 2,620 yards and 18 TDs, completing a lofty 58.2% (210 of 361) of his aerial attempts. When you talk about the game's great signal callers, "Roger the Dodger" has to be rated very high on the list.

In reserve at quarterback, the Cowboys have two talented prospects in Danny White and Glenn Carano, but neither saw much action in '77. The versatile White handles the team's punting, averaging 39.6 yards on 80 kicks last fall, and he would be the first to get the call if regular field general Staubach needed a rest.

The undisputed leader in the pass catching brigade is All-Pro wide receiver Drew Pearson, who raced under 48 aeriels last season, which he carried for 870 yards (18.1 yard average) and two touchdowns. Entering his sixth pro season, Pearson is the third-ranking receiver in team history with 236 catches, trailing only Frank Clarke (281) and Bob Hayes (365).

Stationed at the other wide receiver is six-year pro Golden Richards, who romped for 225 yards and three touchdowns last season on 17 catches. Providing depth at the wide spots are Tony Hill and Butch Johnson, the latter a "hell-for-leather" runner who led the '77 Cowboys in punt (8.5 yard average) and kickoff returns (24.4 yard average).

Sprinting out of the tight end position

## 1978 Schedule

Sep 4	BALTIMORE
Sep 10	at New York Giants
Sep 17	at Los Angeles
Sep 24	ST. LOUIS
Oct 2	at Washington
Oct 8	NEW YORK GIANTS
Oct 15	at St. Louis
Oct 22	PHILADELPHIA
Oct 26	MINNESOTA
Nov 5	at Miami
Nov 12	at Green Bay
Nov 19	NEW ORLEANS
Nov 23	WASHINGTON
Dec 3	NEW ENGLAND
Dec 10	at Philadelphia
Dec 17	at New York Jets

is yet another All-Pro stalwart, Billy Joe DuPree, who rambled for 347 yards and three TDs on 28 receptions last season. DuPree is one of the best at his position, and there's solid depth at tight end in Jay Saldi, a crunching blocker and standout member of the special teams.

For years, the only rap against the Cowboy offense was the lack of a speed-burner to put some wings on the rushing attack. But no more is that the case, since in mercurial Tony Dorsett, Dallas has one of the most gifted long-distance runners in the game.

Last season as a rookie, Dorsett started slowly as he learned the ropes in the NFL, but came on with a rush to chalk up 1,007 yards on 208 carries and score 12 TDs via the ground route. Tony "D" is a slashing runner with great durability for his size (he's listed at 190 pounds; probably weighs closer to 180), and he's the kind of ball carrier who brings the crowd to its feet every time he gets his hands on the pigskin.

Motoring out of the other running back slot is Robert Newhouse, who rushed for 721 yards and scored three times on 180 sorties in '77. Newhouse is a rugged ball carrier who picks up most of his yardage running inside the tackles, which makes him the perfect counterpart for the fleet-

Cowboys	1977 Results	Opp
16	at Minnesota	10
41	NY Giants	21
23	Tampa Bay	7
30	at St. Louis	24
34	Washington	16
16	at Philadelphia	10
37	Detroit	0
24	at N.Y. Giants	10
17	St. Louis	24
13	at Pittsburgh	28
14	at Washington	7
24	Philadelphia	14
42	at San Francisco	35
14	Denver	6

footed Dorsett.

There's also first-rate depth at the running back positions, led by the multi-talented Preston Pearson, third in rushing (341 yards on 89 attempts) and second in pass receiving (46 for 535 yards, four TDs) last season. Others available are Doug Dennison, Scott Laidlaw and Larry Brinson, all capable ball toters.

It seems that hardly a year goes by that the Cowboys don't undergo personnel changes in their offensive line—prior to last season for instance, losing the services of Rayfield Wright and Burton Lawless (with injuries) and Blaine Nye (via retirement). But just as regularly, Coach Landry manages to come up with quality blockers to fill the voids, which accounts for the team's offensive success over the years.

The center is eight-year veteran John Fitzgerald, a reliable performer with great mobility. Backing him up are Tom Rafferty (also a regular at guard) and Jim Cooper, a duo that supplies solid depth in the middle of the line.

Rafferty, a promising third-year-pro, and Herbert Scott plug the guard holes, but one may have to give way to Burton Lawless, back in harness after missing last season because of injury. This youthful threesome provides the Cowboys with

## Dallas Cowboys Rookie Roster

(Listed in order of selection)

NAME	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
Bethea, Larry	DT	6-4	236	Michigan St
Christensen, Todd	RB	6-2	215	Brigham Young
Hudgens, Dave	DT	6-5	235	Oklahoma
Blackwell, Alois	RB	5-11	193	Houston
Rosen, Rich	G	6-4	235	Syracuse
Randolph, Harold	LB	6-2	187	East Carolina
Randall, Tom	DT-DE	6-6	245	Iowa State
Butler, Homer	WR	6-2	184	UCLA
Williams, Russ	DB	6-2	207	Tennessee
Tomasetti, Barry	G	6-4	231	Iowa
Thurman, Dennis	DB	5-11	170	Southern Cal
Washburn, Lee	G-T	6-6	248	Montana St



plenty of blocking firepower at guard, and Rafferty's ability to help out at center is that much more of a plus.

Holding forth at one tackle is Pat Donovan, but his running mate on the other side (Ralph Neely) has retired. Vying for Neely's old spot are ex-regular Rayfield Wright, out last year with an injury, and second-year pro Andy Frederick. Rumor has it that Wright may be on the verge of retiring himself, and if so, his departure will leave the Cowboys dangerously thin at the tackle positions.

**DEFENSE:** There should be a nationwide contest held to pick an adequate nickname for the Cowboys superb defensive unit; some colorful monicker like the Purple People Eaters, the Steel Curtain or the Orange Crush. Our personal favorite as a handle for the Cowpokes is the "Blue Meanies"—'cause that's exactly what Ed (Too Tall) Jones and Harvey (Too Mean) Martin look like as they gallop around the field looking for enemy ball carriers to destroy.

Martin and Jones man the flank positions in the front wall, and we defy you to find a better set of defensive ends in the NFL! A year ago, Martin was a consensus All-Pro pick when his achievements included *twenty-three* quarterback sacks. His counterpart, "Too Tall" Jones (6-9, 265), is capable of the same kind of banner performance once he overcomes his tendency to play in spurts.

Inside at the tackle positions, the Cowboys have Randy White, one of the NFL's budding super stars, and the battle-tested duo of Jethro Pugh and Bill Gregory, who share duties at the other tackle. White isn't the biggest down lineman in the league at 6-4 and 245, but my-oh-my, is he difficult to handle with his quickness and tremendous upper body strength.

The reserve situation in the defensive line is only fair-to-middling, consisting of 11 year veteran Larry Cole and young David Stalls. Cole is a former regular who can fill in at end or tackle, and he should be a valuable sub. But second-year pro Stalls is still a mite "green" to be a reliable performer.

Dating back to the team's founding days, the Cowboys have always been a club that doted on outstanding linebackers. And as any pro football fan knows, having a superb corps of 'backers is one very big step toward a great defense.

Backing up the middle of the line is Bob Breunig, who took over last year when long-time stalwart Leroy Jordan retired. Breunig is a wide-ranging defender ideally suited to play in the middle, and his potential suggests he can be an All-Pro one of these days.

A lot of the same kind of high praise can be lavished on the outside linebackers, Tom Henderson and D. D. Lewis, a pair of hard-hitting veterans. Henderson is the more exciting of the duo, for example running back a pass interception 79 yards for a touchdown last season. But the rock-solid Lewis is probably the steadiest of the regular 'backers, and he's a 215 pound missile who hits with reckless abandon.

The reserve situation at linebacker looks fairly stable, with good young prospects in Mike Hegman, Bruce Huther and

1977 LEADERS					
PASS	A/C	INT	YDS	TD	
Staubach	361/210	9	2620	18	
White	10/4	1	35	0	
REC	NO	YDS	AVG	TD	
Pearson, D.	48	570	18.1	2	
Pearson, P.	46	535	11.6	4	
INT	NO	YDS	AVG	TD	
Harris	5	7	1.4	0	
Henderson	3	79	26.3	1	
RUSH	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD	
Dorsett	208	1007	4.8	12	
Newhouse	180	721	4.0	3	
PUNT	NO	YDS	AVG	BK	
White, D.	80	3171	39.6	10	
Herrera	2	44	22.0	0	
SCORE	TD	EP/M	FG/M	PTS	
Herrera	0	39/41	18/29	93	
Dorsett	13	0/0	0/0	78	

Guy Brown. Hegman is the most promising of that group, a player capable of starting for many other NFL teams. He supplies excellent depth at both the outside linebacking spots.

Just like every area of the defensive

1977 Regular Season Statistics		
	COWBOYS	OPP
FIRST DOWNS	272	205
NET RUSH	2369	1651
Avg Per Game	169.2	117.9
NET PASS	2443	1562
Att/Comp	372/215	370/154
Had Int	10	21
Avg Per Game	174.5	111.6
PUNTS/AVG	83/38.7	102/37.6
Punts Return/Yds	61/545	36/280
Avg Per Return	8.9	7.8
KICKOFF-RET/YDS	44/1071	71/1547
Avg Per Return	24.3	21.8
FUMBLES/LOST	26/14	22/10
FIELD GOALS	18/29	10/15
PATS	39/41	26/26
TOTAL POINTS	345	212

unit, the Cowboys boast exceptional strength in the secondary, but how could it be otherwise? After all, wasn't Coach Landry himself an all-star defensive back during his playing career with the NY Giants? And who would know better than

#### Dallas Cowboys 1978 Veteran Roster

								GAMES
NO.	NAME	POS	HT	WT	AGE	YRS	COLLEGE	IN '77
31	Barnes, Benny	CB	6-1	195	27	7	Stanford	14
53	Breunig, Bob	LB	6-2	227	25	4	Arizona State	14
36	Brinson, Larry	RB	6-0	214	24	2	Florida	14
59	Brown, Guy	LB	6-4	215	23	2	Houston	14
18	Carano, Glenn	QB	6-3	195	23	2	Nevada-Las Vegas	0
63	Cole, Larry	DT-DE	6-5	260	32	11	Hawaii	12
61	Cooper, Jim	T-G	6-5	252	23	2	Temple	14
21	Dennison, Doug	RB	6-0	204	27	5	Kutztown State	10
67	Donovan, Pat	T	6-4	255	25	4	Stanford	14
33	Dorsett, Tony	RB	5-11	192	24	2	Pittsburgh	14
89	DuPree, Billy Joe	TE	6-4	226	28	6	Michigan State	14
76	Eidson, Jim	T-G	6-3	257	24	2	Mississippi State	0
62	Fitzgerald, John	C	6-5	260	30	8	Boston College	12
71	Frederick, Andy	T	6-6	241	24	2	New Mexico	14
77	Gregory, Bill	DT	6-5	260	29	8	Wisconsin	13
43	Harris, Cliff	S	6-1	192	30	9	Ouachita	14
58	Hegman, Mike	LB	6-1	225	25	3	Tennessee State	14
56	Henderson, Thomas	LB	6-2	220	25	4	Langston	14
1	Herrera, Efrén	K	5-9	190	27	4	UCLA	14
81	Howard, Percy	WR	6-4	210	28	2	Austin Peay	0
80	Hill, Tony	WR	6-2	196	22	2	Stanford	14
42	Hughes, Randy	S	6-4	208	25	4	Oklahoma	13
57	Huther, Bruce	LB	6-1	217	24	2	New Hampshire	14
86	Johnson, Butch	WR	6-1	191	24	3	UC-Riverside	14
72	Jones, Ed	DE	6-9	265	27	5	Tennessee State	14
25	Kyle, Aaron	CB	5-10	185	24	3	Wyoming	14
35	Laidlaw, Scott	RB	6-0	205	25	4	Stanford	14
66	Lawless, Burton	G	6-4	250	25	4	Florida	14
50	Lewis, D.D.	LB	6-1	215	33	10	Mississippi State	13
79	Martin, Harvey	DE	6-5	252	28	6	East Texas State	14
44	Newhouse, Robert	RB	5-10	205	28	7	Houston	14
88	Pearson, Drew	WR	6-0	183	27	6	Tulsa	14
26	Pearson, Preston	RB	6-1	206	33	12	Illinois	14
60	Peters, Greg	T	6-5	257	23	1	California	0
75	Pugh, Jethro	DT	6-6	250	34	14	Elizabeth City State	12
64	Rafferty, Tom	G-C	6-3	250	24	3	Penn State	14
20	Renfro, Mel	CB	6-0	192	37	15	Oregon	12
83	Richards, Golden	WR	6-0	180	28	6	Hawaii	14
87	Saldi, Jay	TE	6-3	224	24	3	South Carolina	14
78	Schaum, Greg	DT	6-4	245	24	2	Michigan State	0
68	Scott, Herbert	G	6-2	250	25	4	Virginia Union	12
65	Stalls, David	DT-DE	6-4	236	23	2	Northern Colorado	12
12	Staubach, Roger	QB	6-3	202	36	10	Navy	14
46	Washington, Mark	CB	5-11	187	31	9	Morgan State	14
41	Waters, Charlie	S	6-2	198	30	9	Clemson	14
11	White, Danny	QB-P	6-2	192	26	3	Arizona State	14
54	White, Randy	DT	6-4	245	25	4	Maryland	14
70	Wright, Rayfield	T	6-6	260	33	12	Fort Valley State	2
30	Young, Charles	RB	6-1	220	26	4	North Carolina State	0

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him what to look for in the way of top-notch defenders to prowling the deep zones!

On duty at cornerback are Aaron Kyle and Benny Barnes, with reserve help from Mark Washington and Mel Renfro. That foursome teamed up for five pass interceptions last season, and they will continue to rotate at the cornerback position.

Quick now, try and think of a better safety duo than Cliff Harris (free) and Charlie Waters (strong side). You can't, right? Which is exactly the predicament all-star voters face every year, because while they hate to pick two players from the same defensive secondary, how can you go wrong selecting both Harris and Waters? Supplying depth at safety is Randy Hughes, who intercepted two passes in '77, and he's another of those talented Dallas reserves who could start for some NFL teams.

Handling place kicking duties is Efen Herrera, who finished second (to Chicago's Walter Payton) in NFC scoring last season with 93 points on 39 PATs and 18 field goals. Herrera is one of the best "clutch" kickers in pro football, a player who can swallow the butterflies and split

the uprights with the "key" extra point or field goal.

**GAMEPLAN CONCLUSION:** Yes, siree-bob, this is one mighty fine football team Coach Landry has assembled in Dallas. And we may have been seeing only the proverbial tip-of-the-iceberg last season when the Cowboys sewed up an NFL title with what seemed like amazing ease. However, it would be a fatal mistake—a fatal mistake, indeed—for the Cowboys to let all that praise go to their heads. Repeating as pro football champion is probably even more difficult than winning the darned thing to begin with, because it marks you as the league's top gun—and everybody is aiming at knock-

ing you off! Offensively, the Cowboys are in excellent condition at all the skill positions, paced by supers like Staubach, Drew Pearson, DuPree and Dorsett. But there's some question about the offensive line, especially at the tackle positions, and serious problems could develop if a couple of key performers sustain injuries. The defense is, in the words of the candy bar commercial: "indescribably delicious." Led by standouts like "Too Mean" and "Too Tall" (Harvey Martin and Ed Jones), Randy White, Waters, Harris and the rest of this banner crew, the Cowboys are in first-rate condition as far as starting personnel is concerned. And come to think of it, the reserve strength is pretty impressive, too! Call it something on the order of a 13-win year for the '78 Cowboys under the NFL's new 16-game regular season slate, along with a playoff berth, which Coach Landry's team should be able to parlay into another Super Bowl berth. For more on the outcome of the Cowboys titanic struggle in the next NFL title game, see our 1979 SUPER BOWL PREVIEW on page 12.

**Who Beat The Vegas  
Spread 71% Of The Time?  
See Page 5**

# Philadelphia Eagles

(5-9-0)

It's a good thing Coach Dick Vermeil isn't one of those people who chews his fingernails when he gets nervous. Because if he did he probably would have chewed them all the way up to his elbows last season, when the Eagles lost enough "squeakers" to make any coach a nervous wreck.

On four different occasions during the '77 campaign, the Eagles lost games by margins of four points or less, the difference between a 9-5 finish and the team's final record. But what is most evident about Coach Vermeil's club is the great improvement they've shown in his two years at the helm. And year number three could be even more rewarding if a few requirements are met.

"I think we can line up and be competitive with the talent we have," Vermeil comments, "but we have to be more explosive offensively. Every playoff team has guys who come up with the big plays, guys who score points."

The obvious solution to that shortcoming is via the college draft, since there's a plethora of glittering offensive prospects available this year. But, alas, because of some dubious trades made before Vermeil took the head coaching reins, the Eagles won't have a pick until round three, and most of the "blue-chippers" will probably have been taken by that time.

The biggest noisemaker among the veterans is quarterback Ron Jaworski, a scrambler who can run to daylight when the pass protection breaks down. Jaworski's running ability makes him a drastic departure from the "pure pocket" passers like Roman Gabriel, Norm Snead and Sonny Jurgenson, who ran the team's offense in earlier years. Heck, those former quarterbacks had about as much

mobility between them as the Statue of Liberty.

**OFFENSE:** Last season, his first with the Eagles after playing out his option with the LA Rams, Jaworski tossed strikes on 166 of 346 aeriels, good for 2,183 yards and 18 touchdowns. In his fifth year as a pro, the "Polish Rifle" still has a tendency to throw the ball into heavy traffic (resulting in 21 interceptions in '77) but he should be able to overcome that habit.

"I think he (Jaworski) has a way to go before he'll be as good as he can be," says Coach Vermeil, "(but) he's the kind of guy that we can build a championship team with."

Unfortunately, it looks like curtains for the Eagles if Jaworski sustains an injury, because reserve strength at quarterback is skimpier than the main course at a Weight Watchers banquet! No. 2 signal caller Roman Gabriel has retired after a banner 16-year career, leaving only three-year pro John Walton, who not once attempted a forward pass last season.

Eagles	1977 Results	Opp
13	Tampa Bay	3
0	at Los Angeles	20
13	at Detroit	17
28	at N.Y. Giants	10
17	St. Louis	21
10	Dallas	16
17	at Washington	23
28	New Orleans	7
14	Washington	17
16	at St. Louis	21
6	at New England	14
14	at Dallas	24
17	N.Y. Giants	14
27	N.Y. Jets	0

Head-and-shoulders above the rest of the pass catching brigade—in both playing style and sheer size—is wide receiver Harold Carmichael, who loped for 665 yards and seven TDs with 46 aeriels last season. Carmichael is a 6-8 skyscraper with great hands and exceptional quickness, making him virtually impossible to stop with one-on-one coverage.

Darting out of the other wide receiving berth is Charles Smith, who carried 33 passes for 464 yards and four touchdowns in '77. Carmichael and Smith give the Eagles a solid 1-2 punch at wide receiver, but after them, the only experienced back-up is Vince Papale. Hardly what you'd call a "seasoned veteran" after catching just one forward pass last season.

Operating at the tight end position is four-year pro Keith Krepfle, who caught 27 passes last season (one of them a 55-yard scoring toss) and averaged 19.6 yards per reception. Krepfle is a coming young prospect as a blocker and receiver at tight end, but once again, there's a lack

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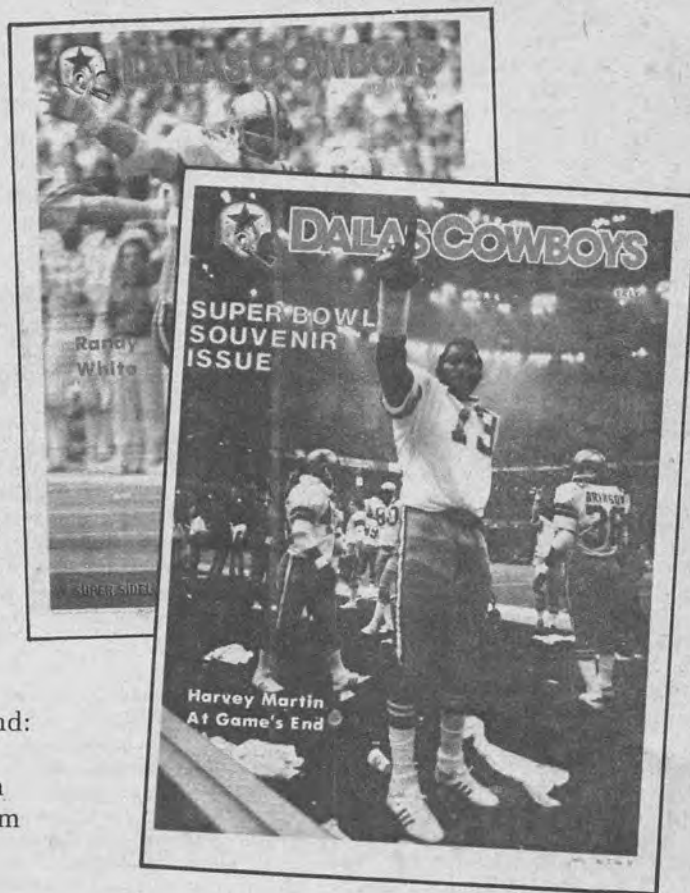
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of quality depth at this position.

The rushing attack is powered by Mike Hogan and Tom Sullivan, a pair of workhorses who plunged for 546 and 363 yards, respectively, in '77. Hogan and Sullivan are also capable receivers who teamed up for 45 catches last fall, but neither has the kind of game-breaking speed Coach Vermeil was talking about when he said the team's offense needs to be more explosive.

The player who *should* add some needed quickness to the ground attack is rocket-powered Wilbert Montgomery, who led the NFC in '77 when he averaged a sizzling 26.9 yards (including one 99-yarder to paydirt) returning 23 kickoffs. But Montgomery's still a little "green" to really assert himself at running back, so other veteran ball toters like James Betterson and Herb Lusk—who rushed for an aggregate 462 yards last season—will probably get first call if help is needed.

In the offensive line, starting personnel is adequate without being overly spectacular. But, and we hate to keep harping on this point, reserve strength up front is questionable, which could prove critical under the NFL's newly expanded 16-game schedule.

Plugging the tackle holes are Ed George and Stan Walters, a pair of veterans sometimes accused of being overly zealous in the use of their hands. In more literal terms, it's called "holding." We ask you, though, what would you do if you were the only thing standing between Harvey "Too Mean" Martin and the fragile limbs of your quarterback? Right, you hang on for dear life and pray the refs are looking the other way!

Stationed at the guards are Jerry Sisemore and Wade Key, while at center is Guy Morris, a good young threesome anchoring the middle of the line. However, they better stay injury-free since depth in the front wall is only average, consisting of Dennis Franks, Tom Luken and Dennis Nelson.

**DEFENSE:** The Eagles switched to a 3-4 defensive alignment last season, and while it's hard to say if that changeover was the only thing responsible, something sure did light a fire under the Eagle defenders in '77. Not only did they set a team record by holding 14 opponents to just 207 points, the Eagles also tied a club mark for quarterback sacks with 47. And just think how much stronger they should be now, with a year's experience in the unique (by NFL standards) 3-4 alignment.

In the defensive line, the middle guard is second-year pro Charlie Johnson, a 260-pounder with the quickness to play nose-up on enemy centers. Johnson has the strength to hold the fort on plays run right up the middle and the range to pursue to the outside, making him an ideal wheelhorse in the three-man line.

Pinching in from one flank is steady nine-year veteran Manny Sistrunk, while opposite him is Carl Hairston, a great young prospect who led the team

## Philadelphia Eagles Rookie Roster

(Listed in order of selection)

NAME	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
Wilkes, Reggie	LB	6-4	218	Georgia Tech
Harrison, Dennis	DT	6-8	262	Vanderbilt
Banks, Norris	RB	6-3	210	Kansas
Marshall, Greg	DT	6-3	245	Oregon St
Williams, Charles	DB	6-2	185	Jackson St
Campfield, Bill	RB	6-1	190	Kansas
Slater, Mark	C	6-1	247	Minnesota

in quarterback sacks (10) and finished second in total tackles (137) last season. Supplying depth in the front wall are Art Thoms and Pete Lazetich, a pair of serviceable veterans capable of filling in for short hauls.

Most everyone knows the "guts" of the 3-4 defense is the linebacking corps, and the Eagles are solid in this area as concerns front-line personnel. But the very nature of the four-line-

backer set-up puts immense pressure on the reserve platoon, and Philly's defense will spring a few leaks if their regular 'backers don't stay healthy.

The leader in every respect at linebacker is All-Pro Bill Bergey, who holds down one of the inside positions. Bergey has been selected a starter for the National Conference in each of the last two Pro Bowls, while playing for a team that won only nine games during

## Philadelphia Eagles 1978 Veteran Roster

NO	NAME	POS	HT	WT	AGE	YR	COLLEGE	GAMES IN '77
66	Bergey, Bill	LB	6-3	245	33	10	Arkansas St	14
34	Betterson, James	RB	6-0	210	24	2	No Carolina	14
95	Bunting, John	LB	6-1	220	28	7	No Carolina	14
67	Burham, Lem	DE	6-4	240	31	2	US International	14
17	Carmichael, Harold	WR	6-8	225	28	8	Southern	14
46	Edwards, Herman	CB	6-0	194	24	2	San Diego St	14
59	Ehlers, Tom	LB	6-2	218	26	4	Kentucky	14
30	Franklin, Cleveland	RB	6-2	220	23	2	Baylor	14
53	Franks, Dennis	C	6-1	245	25	3	Michigan	14
64	George, Ed	T	6-4	270	32	4	Wake Forest	14
74	Green, Don	T	6-7	261	30	8	Purdue	10
78	Hairston, Carl	DE	6-3	245	25	3	Maryland E-S	14
89	Henry, Wally	WR	5-8	170	23	2	UCLA	10
35	Hogan, Mike	RB	6-2	215	23	3	Tenn-Chattanooga	12
7	Jaworski, Ron	QB	6-2	195	27	5	Youngstown St	14
65	Johnson, Charlie	MG	6-3	262	26	2	Colorado	12
49	Johnson, Eric	S	6-1	192	26	2	Washington St	14
6	Jones, Spike	P	6-2	195	31	9	Georgia	14
72	Key, Wade	G	6-5	245	31	9	Southwest Texas St	14
84	Kreple, Keith	TE	6-3	225	26	4	Iowa State	14
73	Lazetich, Pete	MG	6-3	245	28	6	Stanford	14
55	LeMaster, Frank	LB	6-2	231	26	5	Kentucky	14
41	Logan, Randy	S	6-1	195	27	6	Michigan	14
63	Luken, Tom	G	6-3	253	28	6	Purdue	14
32	Lusk, Herb	RB	6-0	190	25	3	Long Beach St	11
54	Mahalic, Drew	LB	6-4	225	25	4	Notre Dame	14
22	Marshall, Larry	KR	5-10	195	28	7	Maryland	14
1	Mike-Mayer, Nick	K	5-9	187	28	6	Temple	3
48	Mitchell, Martin	DB	6-1	180	24	2	Tulane	14
31	Montgomery, Wilbert	RB	5-10	195	24	2	Abilene Christian	14
50	Morris, Guy	C	6-4	255	27	6	Texas Christian	14
71	Nelson, Dennis	T	6-5	260	32	8	Illinois State	2
86	Osborne, Richard	TE	6-3	230	24	3	Texas A & M	14
20	Outlaw, Johnny	CB	5-10	180	32	10	Jackson State	14
83	Papale, Vince	WR	6-2	195	32	3	St. Joseph's (Pa.)	14
82	Payne, Ken	WR	6-2	185	27	5	Langston	4
57	Reed, James	LB	6-2	230	22	2	California	4
26	Sanders, John	S	6-1	175	27	4	So Dakota	14
76	Sisemore, Jerry	G	6-4	260	27	6	Texas	14
79	Sistrunk, Manny	DE	6-5	275	31	9	Arkansas AM & N	14
85	Smith, Charles	WR	6-1	185	28	5	Grambling	14
25	Sullivan, Tom	RB	6-0	190	28	7	Miami	14
58	Tautolo, Terry	LB	6-2	235	24	3	UCLA	14
80	Thoms, Art	DE	6-5	250	31	9	Syracuse	11
75	Walters, Stan	T	6-6	270	30	7	Syracuse	14
11	Walton, John	QB	6-2	210	30	3	Elizabeth City St	0

that period. This really underscores just how good Bergey is because the NFC vote casters don't usually select any player who isn't a Dallas Cowboy, Minnesota Viking or LA Ram!

Rounding out the starting 'backer corps are Frank LeMaster (middle), Drew Mahalic and John Bunting (outside). Bunting is a solid young defender who seldom gets the recognition he deserves. The foremost reserves at linebacker are Terry Tautolo and Tom Ehlers, both capable of filling in if called upon, but there's very little after them.

Last season, the Eagles had a stiff pass defense that limited enemy quarterbacks to just 134.0 yards-per-game. It sure did help to have a defensive line with a merciless pass rush. But the crew patrolling the secondary got burned "deep" a little too often for comfort (14 TD aeriels) last season, and there could be a shake-up in the starting group if things don't improve.

Let's hasten to add that not *all* the Eagle secondary regulars have to shape-up or ship-out, 'cause strong safety Randy Logan is one of the best around at his position. Last season, Logan pilfered five enemy aeriels which he ran back for a 24.8 yard average, and he's a crushing tackler who can shake your fillings loose when he unloads.

Set at the free safety position is John Sanders, the team's leading pass thief (six) in '77, while manning the corners are Herman Edwards and John Outlaw. Edwards and Outlaw combined for eight interceptions last season, but got faked out of their... ah, their sweat socks twice as many times. Improvement at cornerback is essential to an improvement of the pass defense. Heading up the reserve cast in the deep zones are Eric Johnson and Mark Mitchell, who have an aggregate three years NFL experience between them. They have much to learn before they'll be ready for full-time duty.

The Eagles had all sorts of trouble with their kicking game last season, when it seemed a different guy was arriving for a try-out about once a week. In the end, Nick Mike-Mayer wound up the place-kicker (7-of-7 PATs; 3-3 on field goals) and Spike Jones (90 kicks, 37.2 yard average) the punter. Off their respective '77 performances, all we can say is one thing—don't rush out and rent homes with long-term leases, fellas.

**GAMEPLAN CONCLUSION:** It's really been something to watch, the way Dick Vermeil has injected new life into a team that just a few years back seemed to be knocking at death's door. And GAMEPLAN would like to tip its cap to Coach Vermeil for a job well done! It would be nice if we could also say the work is done and the Eagles are ready to soar again, but that would fall under the heading of false labeling. Entering his third year at the team's helm, Coach Vermeil has a clear set of priorities that have to be met before his team hits peak-form, and the list starts with the offensive unit. More specifically, the team's plodding ground attack which, for openers, averaged a puny 122.7 yards-per-game last season, and for closers, accounted for only 10 touchdowns. Plain

1978 GamePlan PRO-FOOTBALL

1977 LEADERS					
PASS	A/C	INT	YDS	TD	
Jaworski	346/166	21	2183	18	
Gabriel	3/1	0	15	0	
REC	NO	YDS	AVG	TD	
Carm'ael	46	665	14.5	7	
Smith	33	464	14.1	4	
INT	NO	YDS	AVG	TD	
Sanders	6	122	20.3	0	
Edwards	6	9	1.5	0	
RUSH	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD	
Hogan	155	546	3.5	0	
Sullivan	125	363	2.9	0	
PUNT	NO	YDS	AVG	BK	
Jones	93	3463	37.2	5	
SCORE	TD	EP/M	FG/M	PTS	
Carm'ael	7	0/0	0/0	42	
Jaworski	5	0/0	0/0	30	

1977 Regular Season Statistics		
	EAGLES	OPP
FIRST DOWNS	211	216
NET RUSH	1719	1917
Avg Per Game	122.7	136.9
NET PASS	1856	1876
Att/Comp	349/167	358/183
Had Int	21	21
Avg Per Game	132.5	134.0
PUNTS/AVG	95/36.5	91/38.7
Punts Return/Yds	50/518	45/244
Avg Per Return	10.4	5.4
KICKOFF-RET/YDS	45/1110	47/940
Avg Per Return	24.7	20.0
FUMBLES/LOST	30/16	26/13
FIELD GOALS	7/15	11/26
PATS	25/29	24/25
TOTAL POINTS	220	207

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old speed, and large doses of it thank you, is what the rushing game needs. But unless the Eagles come up with a "sleeper" in the college draft or swing some sort of deal for a speedy ball totter (and such critters are hard to come by), the rushing attack will be its usual grind-it-out self again. The passing game has far more potential for explosiveness, especially now that quarterback Jaworski has had some time to adjust. With the "Polish Rifle" aiming at the likes of Carmichael, Charles Smith and Krepfle, opponents will find the Eagle passing attack increasingly difficult to handle. Over on defense, there's a solid nucleus of veterans on hand, led by stalwarts like Bergey, Sistrunk and Logan. Toss in a sprinkling of young prospects like Johnson, Hairston, Bunting and Edwards, and you have the makings for a solid starting 11 on defense. But on both sides of the line-of-scrimmage, there's a lack of proven depth, and the Eagles may never get off the ground if a number of regulars get bit by the injury bug. Coach Vermeil is putting together a respectable team in Philadelphia, one capable of winning at least eight games this year, and that might be enough to move them into second spot in the NFC East. But that's as far as the Eagles will go in their division, because looming at the top are the Dallas Cowboys, and getting them off their perch will require nothing less than a 50-megaton blast.



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# Washington Redskins

(9-5-0)

That crazy old coaching merry-go-round has taken another of its unpredictable spins, this time in Washington, where ex-Chicago Bears' mentor Jack Pardee snatched the golden ring following the ouster of George (The Future Is Now) Allen. For the 41-year-old Pardee, this is his second tour-of-duty in the nation's capitol, having played (as a starting outside linebacker) and served as an assistant coach under Allen from 1971-73.

"I'm happy and thrilled to come back to Washington," Pardee says, "(and) we are cheerfully looking forward to the years ahead of us."

Unfortunately, he may not be so "happy and thrilled" when he sees the task that awaits him, since Pardee will have to figure some way to get one more good year out of the many veteran players who make up Washington's "Over-the-Hill" gang. Let's face it, after so many years of defying the laws of age and logic, the 'Skins are finally beginning to show the inevitable signs of deterioration.

Last season, for instance, the Redskins held their 14 regular season opponents to only 17 total points in first quarter action, but surrendered 103 in the fourth period. Now, to the casual observer, those statistics may not signify all that much, but to us they suggest a pattern.

That pattern is this: In the early stages of games, when the 'Skins are still fresh, they're as tough as ever to penetrate. However, in the late going, the "Over-the-Hill" gang seems more vulnerable when fatigue and all those years of NFL combat start taking their toll. And while we have nothing but high regard for new head coach Jack Pardee, it will be interesting to see if he can work the same miracles as his predecessor, George Allen, who was always able to get more out of the Redskins than they ever looked capable of giving under the circumstances.

**OFFENSE:** At the offensive throttle for the 'Skins is 38-year-old Billy Kilmer, one of the best "money" players in the game when big stakes are on the table. Last season, while sharing regular duties (with Joe Theismann), Kilmer tossed strikes on 99 of 201 passes, accounting for 1,182 yards and eight touchdowns, many times in the kind of pressure-packed situation that would have completely undone a younger signal caller.

No one will ever accuse Kilmer of being the most picturesque passer in the NFL, and in plain truth, many of his aeriels resemble a partridge with a load of buckshot in its tail. But for getting the job done on a consistent basis, and coming up with the necessary yardage and points on "key" downs, ol' Billy is the guy to have at quarterback.

Providing depth at signal caller is the above mentioned Theismann, who rolled up 1,097 yards in '77 while completing 84 of 182 passes, including seven TD aeriels. Theismann is far and away the better of the quarterbacking duo when it comes to

## 1978 Schedule

Sep 3	at New England
Sep 10	PHILADELPHIA
Sep 17	at St. Louis
Sep 24	NEW YORK JETS
Oct 2	DALLAS
Oct 8	at Detroit
Oct 15	at Philadelphia
Oct 22	at New York Giants
Oct 29	SAN FRANCISCO
Nov 6	at Baltimore
Nov 12	NEW YORK GIANTS
Nov 19	ST. LOUIS
Nov 23	at Dallas
Dec 3	MIAMI
Dec 10	at Atlanta
Dec 16	CHICAGO

running the football, having averaged 5.1 yards per carry last season, and he's got the makings of a solid field general who should be able to take over full-time when he starts playing with more consistency.

The "main man" in the receiving corps is All-NFC tight end Jean Fugett, who rambled for 631 yards on 36 catches (an excellent 17.5 yard average) and snagged five scoring aeriels a year ago. Fugett's a great clutch receiver with a knack for hanging onto passes even when enemy defenders are draped all over him. Supplying depth at this position is former regular Jerry Smith, a 14-year veteran who's caught more touchdown passes (60) than any tight end in NFL history.

Zooming out of one wide receiver berth is Frank Grant, who had some injury problems last season but still came up with 34 catches for 480 yards and three TDs. Opposite him is another speedster, Danny Buggs, a NY Giant castoff who had 26 receptions for 341 yards in '77. Buggs is a 4.4 sprinter who was a big bust with the Giants, but like so many other players before him, he's blossomed as a steady performer since coming to the Redskins in '76 as a free agent.

In reserve at wide receiver, the 'Skins have Larry Jones and Charley Taylor, the latter one of the great pass catchers in the game's annals. A year ago, Taylor raced under 14 aeriels, lifting his career total to 649, more than any other player in NFL history.

Scampering out of one running back slot is four-year pro Mike Thomas, who

Redskins	1977 Results	Opp
17	at NY Giants	20
10	Atlanta	6
24	St. Louis	14
10	at Tampa Bay	0
16	at Dallas	34
6	NY Giants	17
23	Philadelphia	17
3	at Baltimore	10
17	at Philadelphia	14
10	Green Bay	9
7	Dallas	14
10	at Buffalo	0
26	St. Louis	20
17	Los Angeles	14

rushed for a team-leading 806 yards and three TDs on 228 carries last season. Thomas also led the running backs in pass receptions with 28 (for 245 yards and two scores) in '77. He's an amazingly durable performer considering he looks much smaller than his listed program size of 5-11 and 190 pounds.

Set to go at the other running back is John Riggins, back in harness again after sitting out most of last year with a knee injury. Riggins is a pile-driving 230-pounder who can pick up the tough yardage running "up the gut," and his return gives the rushing attack solid overall balance.

The remaining veterans at running back are Clarence Harmon, Jim Kiick and Eddie Moss, but it's questionable if they can produce on a regular basis if needed. As usual, the 'Skins aren't likely to get much help here via the college draft because of George Allen's policy of trading draft picks for veteran players. So don't be surprised if Washington tries to swing a deal or two to improve the depth at running back.

The offensive line is anchored by veteran center Len Hauss, a solid performer who hasn't missed a single regular season game in his 14 years with the Redskins. Backing him up is seven-year pro Ted Fritsch, a competent reserve and also a standout member of the special teams.

Stationed at the guard positions are battle-tested stalwarts Terry Hermeling and Ron Saul, both embarking on their

## Washington Redskins Rookie Roster

(Listed in order of selection)

NAME	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
Green, Tony	RB	5-9	185	Florida
Lee, Walker	WR	6-0	169	North Carolina
Hover, Dan	LB	6-2	220	Washington St
Hurley, John	QB	6-2	189	Santa Clara
Hertenstein, Scott	DE	6-3	240	Azusa Pacific
Shaw, Hughie	RB	6-1	235	Texas A & I
Williams, Mike	DB	6-0	183	Texas A & M
McCabe, Steve	G	6-5	265	Bowdoin

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ninth NFL campaign. They are capably supported by Dan Nugent, an ex-LA Ram who came to Washington in '76 in exchange for (what else?) two future draft picks.

In George Starke and Tom Stoke, the 'Skins have a steady young tackle duo capable of supplying the blocking protection needed to make the passing game work so well. However, there's very little depth after them, and that shortcoming could prove a headache if the starting tandem can't stay healthy.

**DEFENSE:** How in the world do they do it? That is, how does the Redskin defensive unit—which has the oldest lineup this side of your local hospital's geriatrics ward—continue to play so well?

Simple, really, the 'Skins do it by playing hard, error-free football, and perhaps most important of all, they play the kind of hustling game that forces opponents into making the mistakes. And that, my dear Dr. Watson, is the hallmark of an outstanding defense.

In the front wall, one flank position is manned by Ron (The Dancing Bear) McDole, an 18-year veteran and the elder statesman on the entire team. McDole isn't overly big, or especially fast, but there's very little that gets by him, and he's also a relentless pass rusher.

There's a three-way battle shaping up for starting duties at the opposite flank, involving Will Wynn, Karl Lorch and Dallas Hickman, all of whom seem capable of handling the job should they be called upon. Wynn (an ex-Philadelphia Eagle) and Lorch (a former WFLer) are Washington reclamation projects of the standard order, but surprise of surprises, Hickman is one of the Redskins rare draft picks (ninth round in '75) who stuck with the club.

Holding forth at one defensive tackle spot is 12-year veteran Diron Talbert, the most consistent lineman in the front four. Talbert always ranks among the top tacklers and quarterback sackers for the 'Skins, and last season he also tied for the team lead (with Ron McDole) when he blocked two enemy field goal attempts.

Stomping enemy ball carriers at the opposite tackle is man-mountain Dave Butz (6-7, 285), the biggest thing this side of the Washington Monument. Backing him up is former regular Bill Brundige, and he will supply first-rate depth if he can avoid the nagging injuries that curtailed his play last season.

The 'Skins have a hard-hitting corps of linebackers, paced by 14-year veteran Chris Hanburger at one outside spot. Hanburger missed the early part of last season following an operation to remove a balky appendix, but he came back late in the campaign to turn in his usual outstanding performance.

Stationed at the other outside linebacking position is hardnosed Brad Dusek, while rounding out the starting threesome is middle man Harold McClinton. Both Dusek and McClinton are exponents of the team's aggressive, though mistake-free defensive style, capable of playing tough against the run as well as the pass.

Reserve strength at linebacker consists of Mike Curtis, Joe Harris, Rusty Tillman and Joe Wysocki. Curtis, a former All-Pro with the Baltimore Colts, is the

1977 LEADERS					
PASS	A/C	INT	YDS	TD	
Killmer	201/99	7	1187	8	
Theismann	182/84	9	1097	7	
REC	NO	YDS	AVG	TD	
Fugett	36	631	17.5	5	
Grant	34	480	14.1	3	
INT	NO	YDS	AVG	TD	
Houston	5	69	13.8	0	
Lavender	4	36	9.0	0	
RUSH	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD	
Thomas	228	806	3.5	3	
Harmon	94	310	3.3	0	
PUNT	NO	YDS	AVG	BK	
Bragg	91	3502	38.5	3	
SCORE	TD	EP/M	FG/M	PTS	
Moseley	0	19/19	21/37	82	
Thomas	5	0/0	0/0	30	

1977 Regular Season Statistics		
	REDSKINS	OPP
FIRST DOWNS	227	234
NET RUSH	1752	2039
Avg Per Game	125.1	145.6
NET PASS	1863	2071
Att/Comp	383/183	380/167
Had Int	16	21
Avg Per Game	133.1	147.9
PUNTS/AVG	91/38.5	94/37.0
Punts Return/Yds	57/452	50/228
Avg Per Return	7.9	4.6
KICKOFF-RET/YDS	47/1087	54/1033
Avg Per Return	23.1	19.1
FUMBLES/LOST	26/14	27/12
FIELD GOALS	21/37	14/29
PATS	19/19	21/21
TOTAL POINTS	196	189

### Washington Redskins 1978 Veteran Roster

								GAMES
NO	NAME	POS	HT	WT	AGE	YR	COLLEGE	IN '77
4	Bragg, Mike	P	5-11	186	32	11	Richmond	14
25	Brown, Eddle	S	5-11	190	26	5	Tennessee	14
77	Brundige, Bill	DT	6-5	270	30	9	Colorado	12
88	Buggs, Danny	WR	6-2	185	25	4	West Virginia	14
65	Butz, Dave	DT	6-7	285	28	6	Purdue	12
32	Curtis, Mike	LB	6-2	232	35	14	Duke	12
59	Dusek, Brad	LB	6-2	214	28	5	Texas A & M	14
37	Fischer, Pat	CB	5-9	170	38	18	Nebraska	3
66	Fritsch, Ted	C	6-2	242	28	7	St. Norbert	14
85	Fryer, Brian	WR	6-1	185	25	2	Edmonton	0
84	Fugett, Jean	TE	6-4	230	27	7	Amherst	14
46	Grant, Frank	WR	5-11	181	28	6	S'thern Colorado	14
40	Hall, Windlan	S	5-11	175	28	7	Arizona State	8
55	Hanburger, Chris	LB	6-2	218	37	14	No Carolina	5
38	Harmon, Clarence	RB	5-11	190	23	2	Mississippi St	12
51	Harris, Joe	LB	6-1	225	26	2	Georgia Tech	11
—	Hartle, Greg	LB	6-2	225	27	4	Newberry	0
56	Haus, Len	C	6-2	235	36	15	Georgia	14
75	Hermeling, Terry	G	6-5	255	32	9	Nevada-Reno	13
82	Hickman, Dallas	DE	6-6	235	26	3	Cal-Berkeley	14
35	Hill, Calvin	RB	6-4	227	31	9	Yale	14
27	Houston, Ken	S	6-3	198	34	12	Prairie View	14
61	Johnson, Dennis	DE	6-4	265	27	5	Delaware	11
21	Jones, Larry	WR	5-10	170	27	5	N'east Missouri	14
30	Klick, Jim	RB	5-11	215	32	9	Wyoming	1
17	Killmer, Billy	QB	6-0	204	39	16	UCLA	8
—	Kinney, Jeff	RB	6-2	215	29	6	Nebraska	0
54	Kuziel, Bob	CT	6-5	255	28	4	Pittsburgh	14
20	Lavender, Joe	CB	6-4	190	29	6	San Diego St	14
71	Lorch, Karl	DE	6-3	258	28	3	S'thern Cal	14
79	McDole, Ron	DE	6-4	265	39	18	Nebraska	14
—	McGraw, Mike	LB	6-2	225	25	2	Wyoming	0
53	McClinton, Harold	LB	6-2	235	31	10	Southern	14
3	Moseley, Mark	K	6-0	205	30	7	Stephen F. Austin	14
36	Moss, Eddle	RB	6-0	225	30	5	S'east Missouri	9
29	Murphy, Mark	S	6-4	210	23	2	Colgate	14
62	Nugent, Dan	G	6-3	250	25	3	Auburn	14
57	O'Dell, Stu	LB	6-1	220	27	5	Indiana	3
—	Parrish, Scott	T	6-6	275	25	2	Utah State	0
—	Reamon, Tommy	RB	5-10	192	26	2	Missouri	0
44	Riggins, John	RB	6-2	230	29	8	Kansas	5
—	Russ, Carl	LB	6-2	227	25	4	Michigan	0
64	Saul, Ron	G	6-3	254	30	9	Michigan St	14
13	Scott, Jake	S	6-0	188	33	9	Georgia	14
74	Starke, George	T	6-5	250	30	6	Columbia	14
76	Stokes, Tim	T	6-5	252	28	5	Oregon	14
72	Talbert, Diron	DT	6-5	255	34	12	Texas	14
42	Taylor, Charley	WR	6-3	210	36	15	Arizona St	12
7	Theismann, Joe	QB	6-0	190	29	5	Notre Dame	14
22	Thomas, Mike	RB	5-11	190	25	4	UNLV	13
67	Tillman, Rusty	LB	6-2	230	30	9	N'thern Arizona	14
—	Weatherly, Jim	C	6-3	250	26	2	No College	0
45	Williams, Gerard	CB	6-1	184	26	3	Langston	14
70	Wynn, Will	DE	6-4	245	29	5	Tennessee St	1
50	Wysocki, Pete	LB	6-2	225	30	4	W'stern Michigan	13

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most accomplished of that group, and he's a 13-year pro who fits right in with the "Over-the-Hill" gang.

Enemy passers always seem to have the utmost difficulty denting Washington's standout secondary crew, and last season was no exception. The 'Skins intercepted a total of 21 aeriels and allowed opponents to complete only 43.9% of their passes. The leading pass thief on duty is strong safety Ken Houston, who swiped five in '77 and was selected to play in the Pro Bowl for the eighth consecutive year (five times with Washington, three with the Houston Oilers).

On the prowl at free safety is nine-year veteran Jake Scott, a head's-up defender who had three pass interceptions a year ago. The foremost reserves at the safety spots are Brig Owens, Mark Murphy and Windlan Hall, the latter an ex-San Francisco 49er who can also fill in at a cornerback position.

Big-play specialist Joe Lavender, who came up with four interceptions in '77, is stationed at one cornerback spot, while his counterpart is Gerard Williams, also credited with four aerial thefts last season. Supporting them are one-time regular Pat Fischer, although his status is questionable after he missed last year with an injury, and Eddie Brown, a nifty open-field runner who led the 'Skins in

both punt (57 for 7.9 yard average) and kickoff (34 for 25.1 yard average) returns in '77.

Handling place kicking duties is golden toe Mark Moseley, who was a letter-perfect 19-of-19 on extra point attempts and drilled 21 of 37 field goals last season. Among Moseley's field goal conversions were four that traveled 50-plus yards, which was more than any other kicker in the NFL. Mike Bragg, who last year averaged 38.5 yards a kick and has good accuracy, is the regular punter.

**GAMEPLAN CONCLUSION:** It's a brand new era in Washington, and we'd like to wish Jack Pardee all the luck in the world in his new assignment. Because, quite frankly, we think he's going to need it! No, we're not forecasting a total collapse by the Redskins, not by any stretch of the imagination. However, what is obvious is that the 'Skins are really showing their age, enough so to prevent them from making their usual run at the title in the NFC East. On offense, quarterback Kilmer's no spring chicken anymore and, while he's still got the moxie to run the show, we have to feel that his playing days have dwindled down to a precious few. And Joe Theismann still hasn't convinced us that he's ready to

take over the throttle. The offense could also use a stronger rushing attack to balance things out, although Mike Thomas (happy now after some contract disputes in '77) and a healthy Riggins should help greatly in that respect. And another shortcoming may be the offensive line, not so much in terms of starting personnel, but in the lack of quality depth in the front wall. The defense can best be described as old, older and oldest. But this hustling gang still has the makings of another solid performance provided veterans like McDole, Talbert, Hanburger and Houston continue to play their grudging, injury-free game. Washington is fortunate, indeed, to be playing in the NFC East where, outside of the awesome Dallas Cowboys, there really isn't that much in the way of first-rate opposition. Which is the main reason we think the '77 edition of Redskins, the first under Coach Jack Pardee, will make a very strong bid to occupy the number two rung in their division, possibly winning enough games to qualify for one of the two NFC wild card berths that are up for grabs. But beyond that, we honestly can't see the "Over-the-Hill" gang presenting more than a token threat to perennial National Conference powers like the Cowboys and LA Rams when it comes to this year's Super Bowl sweepstakes.

# St. Louis Cardinals

(7-7-0)

Love him or hate him—and there's about a 50-50 split along those lines—one thing you have to admit. Bill Bidwell, chief executive of the Cardinals, is a guy who does things in his own flamboyant way. Like when he dropped the bombshell of the decade on the pro football world earlier this year, by signing as his team's new head coach none other than the legendary Bud Wilkinson.

"I'm thrilled," Bidwell comments, "There were others we talked with who could have taken the Cardinals to the playoffs, but this man (Wilkinson) can take us to the Super Bowl and he'll take us there with class."

For the 61-year-old Wilkinson, who has been out of coaching since his days (1947-65) at Oklahoma University, this will be his first tour-of-duty in the NFL. But in all honesty, he doesn't expect to find things have changed all that much over the years, explaining: "I think I'm relatively current. Pro football is at a higher level of sophistication, but I think the factors that win games are the same at any level."

No argument on that point, although we do have to question just how much success Wilkinson will be able to enjoy in his maiden voyage with the Big Red. This is a talented ball club, no doubt, but it simply collapsed at the end of the '77 campaign—their last under Don Coryell—when their playoff aspirations vanished in the smoke of four consecutive losses. And, as if Wilkinson didn't already face an uphill battle in getting the Cards squared-away, the team's premier running back—Terry Metcalf—has

1978 Schedule		
Sep 3	at Chicago	
Sep 10	NEW ENGLAND	
Sep 17	WASHINGTON	
Sep 24	at Dallas	
Oct 1	at Miami	
Oct 8	BALTIMORE	
Oct 15	DALLAS	
Oct 22	at New York Jets	
Oct 29	at Philadelphia	
Nov 5	NEW YORK GIANTS	
Nov 12	at San Francisco	
Nov 19	at Washington	
Nov 26	PHILADELPHIA	
Dec 3	DETROIT	
Dec 10	at New York Giants	
Dec 17	ATLANTA	

jumped ship and signed as a free agent in the Canadian pro league.

**OFFENSE:** Piloting a potent attack is heady veteran signal caller Jim Hart, a consensus Pro Bowl selection who was on target with 186 of 355 passes last season, including 13 touchdown aeriels, while surrendering 20 interceptions. Hart still has a tendency to "force" his passes when he's pressured, but when you consider the way he can thread the needle with his aeriels, it makes it mighty tough for enemy deep backs to cope with his potential receivers.

The reserve quarterbacks are Bill Donckers and Steve Pisarkiewicz, not an awe-inspiring duo. But the Cards have high hopes for Pisarkiewicz, their No. 1 pick in last year's college draft, as the Big Red's signal caller of the future once he's served his apprenticeship.

Wide receiver Ike Harris (team-high 40

Cardinals	1977 Results	Opp
0	at Denver	7
16	Chicago	13
14	at Washington	24
24	Dallas	30
21	at Philadelphia	17
49	New Orleans	31
28	New York Giants	0
27	at Minnesota	7
24	at Dallas	17
21	Philadelphia	16
14	Miami	55
7	at NY Giants	27
20	Washington	26
7	at Tampa Bay	17

catches in '77) is gone via trade to New Orleans, but his old sidekick—Mel Gray—is back to drive enemy pass defenders crazy. Last season, the flying Gray averaged a sizzling 20.6 yards and caught five TD aeriels on 38 catches. Even double-coverage can't stop him from "breaking" a few long ones every year.

Set to go at the other wide receiver is promising Pat Tilley, who darted for 64 yards on nine catches in '77. Or at least, that's what the Cards fervently hope, because after that, pickin's at the wide spots are thinner than the main course at a Health Food restaurant!

Stationed at tight end is elongated J. V. Cain, who cantered for 328 yards and two scores on 25 receptions last season. However, depth at this position was depleted somewhat by the retirement of Jackie Smith, one of the premier tight ends in

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league history.

With Metcalf gone north of the border, half the starting ball totting duo returns in 200-pounder Wayne Morris, who bolted for 661 yards and scored eight TDs on 165 carries a year ago. As a runner, Morris has the makings of a guy who can crack the heralded 1,000-yard rushing plateau, especially now that he won't have to share so much of the ball totting assignments with Metcalf.

Jim Otis, a 225-pound steamroller who crashed for 334 yards in brief relief roles in '77, should nail down the other regular job at running back. But not without a squabble from blue-chipper George Franklin. Franklin's a 220-pounder blessed with extraordinary speed (9.4 for the 100 in college) and he will be a super outside running threat now that he's mended from an injury that laid him low most of last season.

As most everyone knows, there's been a change in the starting personnel in the offensive line, with star guard Conrad ("I'm not dirty, just mean") Dobler dispatched to the New Orleans Saints via trade. Will his loss hurt the attack much? Hardly, with standouts like Tom Banks (center), Dan Dierdorf (tackle) and Bob Young (guard)—Pro Bowlers one and all—back on duty.

Underrated Roger Finnie mans the other tackle hole, with back-up support from Brad Oates. Vying for the only vacancy up front (Dobler's old berth) will be Keith Wortman and Terry Stieve, a former regular with the New Orleans Saints picked up in a trade.

**DEFENSE:** Bud Wilkinson, meet your team's defensive unit. A few stalwarts like Roger Wehrli and Mike Dawson, a handful of others who can improve—*provided they stay healthy*—but not a whole lot else. For some unfathomable reason, the Cards have used most of their high picks to select offensive, rather than defensive, prospects over the years, with the possible exception of DT Dawson in '76. The obvious result was a porous Big Red defense that '77 opponents ripped for 322.0 yards-per-game and 34 touchdowns.

In the front wall, the terminal positions are manned by John Zook and Ron Yankowski, only "average" at the art of pass rushing. Supplying depth on the outside are veteran Bob Bell and Bob Pollard. Pollard, an ex-New Orleans Saint, is a relentless pass rusher, which should make him an asset in the defensive line as an end or a tackle.

Budding superstar Mike Dawson, a quick 270-pounder, holds forth at one tackle, while opposite him at the other tackle is Charlie Davis, only so-so in the middle because of his lack of height at 6-1 and 265-pounds. The top reserve at tackle is former Buffalo Bill Walt Patulski, but therein lies a story. Along with defensive linemates Bob Bell and Charley Davis, Patulski has become a free agent, meaning all three could end up plying their wares for some other NFL club this year.

Injuries hit early and often in the line-backing corps last season, leaving only Mark Arneson and Eric Williams (outside) and Marv Kellum (middle) fairly healthy for the entire campaign. Arneson is the most reliable of that trio, but alas, he too is a free agent and may go which-

## St. Louis Cardinals Rookie Roster

(Listed in order of selection)

NAME	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
Little, Steve	K-P	6-0	183	Arkansas
Greene, Ken	DB	6-2	187	Washington St
Barefield, John	LB	6-3	210	Texas A & I
Greene, Doug	DB	6-0	172	Texas A & I
Collins, George	G	6-3	235	Georgia
Childs, Jim	WR	6-3	210	Cal Poly-SLO
Carr, Earl	RB	6-1	224	Florida
Williams, Jack	DE	6-3	248	Bowling Green
Stief, Dave	WR	6-2	205	Portland St
Mosely, Joe	TE	6-2	214	Central St (Ohio)
Gill, Randy	LB	6-3	235	San Jose St
Clay, Anthony	LB	6-2	210	S Carolina St

ever way the ball (or the pay check) bounces. Kellum is a good defender who simply needs to improve on his "drops" for pass coverage, while Williams is a

promising second-year pro who played his college ball at a school (Southern Cal) noted for turning out quality linebackers.

There are reserves a-plenty at the

## St. Louis Cardinals 1978 Veteran Roster

NO	NAME	POS	HT	WT	AGE	YR	COLLEGE	GAMES
								IN '77
27	Allen, Carl	DB	6-0	186	23	2	S'them Miss	14
50	Allerman, Kurt	LB	6-3	222	23	2	Penn State	14
57	Arneson, Mark	LB	6-2	224	29	7	Arizona	14
75	Audick, Dan	G	6-3	245	24	2	Hawaii	2
25	Bakken, Jim	K	6-0	198	38	17	Wisconsin	14
54	Banks, Tom	C-G	6-2	244	30	6	Auburn	14
79	Bell, Bob	DE	6-4	257	30	8	Cincinnati	7
58	Black, Tim	LB	6-2	225	23	2	Baylor	4
30	Bradley, Bill	S	5-11	190	31	10	Texas	4
51	Braham, Tom	C	6-2	246	27	6	Oklahoma	14
88	Cain, J. V.	TE	6-4	221	27	5	Colorado	13
12	Carrell, Duane	P	5-10	185	29	5	Florida State	10
26	Colbert, Rony	CB	5-9	165	24	4	Lamar	4
76	Davis, Charlie	DT	6-2	268	27	5	Texas Christian	14
73	Dawson, Mike	DT	6-4	274	25	3	Arizona	14
72	Dierdorf, Dan	T	6-3	288	29	8	Michigan	12
10	Donckers, Bill	QB	6-1	205	27	3	San Diego St	5
59	Fenlaw, Rick	LB	6-1	200	25	1	Texas	0
60	Finnie, Roger	T	6-3	248	33	10	Florida A&M	14
44	Franklin, George	RB	6-3	226	24	1	Texas A&I	0
28	Giblin, Robert	S	6-1	205	26	4	Houston	11
85	Gray, Mel	WR	5-9	173	30	8	Missouri	14
17	Hart, Jim	QB	6-1	210	34	13	S'them Illinois	14
34	Jones, Steve	RB	6-0	198	27	6	Duke	14
56	Kearney, Tim	LB	6-2	221	28	7	N'thern Michigan	14
59	Kellum, Marv	LB	6-2	225	26	5	Wichita St	14
32	Latin, Jerry	RB	5-10	186	25	4	N'thern Illinois	14
24	Morris, Wayne	RB	6-0	208	24	3	SMU	12
53	Neils, Steve	LB	6-2	218	27	5	Minnesota	14
38	Nelson, Lee	CB	5-10	185	24	3	Florida St	10
65	Oates, Brad	T	6-6	274	25	3	Brigham Young	10
35	Otis, Jim	RB	6-0	226	30	9	Ohio State	13
74	Patulski, Walt	DT	6-6	267	28	6	Notre Dame	14
15	Pisarkiewicz, Steve	QB	6-2	205	25	2	Missouri	0
82	Pollard, Bob	DE	6-3	251	30	8	Weber State	14
36	Reaves, Ken	S	6-3	208	34	13	Norfolk St (Va.)	14
20	Sensibaugh, Mike	S	5-11	190	29	8	Ohio State	10
46	Severson, Jeff	CB-S	6-1	185	29	7	Long Beach St	14
42	Smith, Perry	CB	6-0	190	27	6	Colorado St	3
68	Stieve, Terry	G	6-2	245	24	3	Wisconsin	14
23	Stone, Ken	DB-WR	6-1	180	28	6	Vanderbilt	14
83	Tilley, Pat	WR	5-10	171	25	3	Louisiana Tech	14
22	Wehrli, Roger	CB	6-0	193	31	10	Missouri	14
55	White, Ray	LB	6-2	220	29	5	Syracuse	0
55	Williams, Eric	LB	6-2	217	23	2	S'thern Cal	14
62	Wortman, Keith	G	6-2	262	28	7	Nebraska	14
78	Yankowski, Ron	DE	6-5	258	32	8	Kansas St	14
64	Young, Bob	G	6-1	279	36	13	Howard Payne	14
63	Zook, John	DE	6-5	254	31	10	Kansas	12

'backer spots, including Steve Neils, Tim Kearney, Tim Black, Kurt Alleman, Rick Fenlaw and Ray Willie. Fenlaw and Willie are back after sitting out '77 with injuries. However, we seriously doubt the present set of linebackers—with maybe the exception of Arneson and Williams—will be able to hold the fort. The Cards will probably go through a lot of try-outs before settling on a regular 'backing corps.

The secondary was hit by more than its fair share of injuries in '77, and it sure didn't help when star cornerback Norm Thompson defected to the Washington Redskins as a free agent. All of which contributed to a flimsy aerial defense—with no help from the anemic pass rush of the team's front four—that was shredded for 22 touchdown aeriels.

The watch-dog in the deep zones is Pro Bowl cornerback Roger Wehrli, a sure-handed tackler in the open field who led the team with five pass interceptions last season. Located at the other corner is Lee Nelson, who added three pass thefts before an injury sidelined him late in '77, but he's all set to go again. Backing up the corner regulars are Carl Allen, who filled in last year when Nelson was hurt, Rony Colbert and Perry Smith.

Strong safety is the personal turf of tough 13-year pro Ken Reeves, while the free safety is Mike Sensibaugh, who last season pilfered three enemy aeriels and romped 79-yards to paydirt with one theft. Support at the safeties consists of Bob Giblin and Bill Bradley, the latter a former All-Pro with the Philadelphia Eagles.

Long a bastion of strength for the Cards has been placekicker Jim Bakken, whose "clutch" kicking has won more games than you could count on your fingers. But he experienced a disappointing '77 season when he scored a low (for him) total of 56 points on 35 PATs and 7 field goals. Two different punters (Terry Joyce and Duane Carrell) tried their hand at the job last season, but both were found wanting, and the search for a long and accurate kicker will probably continue.

**GAMEPLAN CONCLUSION:** Well, hot damn and roll out the red carpet, Bud Wilkinson (ex-college coach, Congressional candidate, TV commentator and executive) is taking the Big Red's coaching reins. And isn't that a feather in the cap of team top-kick Bill Bidwell, signing a man who is the epitome of class and cool—plus, a heck of a coach to boot! Unfortunately, the situation in St. Louis is, in a word, chaotic. Metcalf, Dobler and Harris are gone and others—like Arneson, Charlie Davis, Jim Otis, Ken Reeves and a few more—are testing the free agent waters. Who knows, many of those still around may stick with St. Louis for this season, a plus to be sure. But, and this is the bottom line, what can this turmoil (if you want to call it that) do to team harmony? On offense, Hart is a great one, though he still gives up "silly" interceptions, and receivers like Mel Gray and J. V. Cain are there to haul his spirals in. The rushing attack will miss Metcalf, but not really all that much with phenoms like Morris still on hand. Morris has inside power plus tremendous acceleration to get outside. And remember, you heard

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1977 LEADERS					
PASS	A/C	INT	YDS	TD	
Hart	355/186	20	2542	13	
Donckers	5/5	0	38	0	
REC	NO	YDS	AVG	TD	
Harris	40	547	13.7	3	
Gray	38	782	20.6	5	
INT	NO	YDS	AVG	TD	
Wehrli	5	44	8.8	0	
Nelson	4	37	9.3	0	
RUSH	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD	
Metcalf	149	739	5.0	4	
Morris	165	661	4.0	8	
PUNT	NO	YDS	AVG	BK	
Joyce	22	851	38.7	2	
Carrell	49	1757	35.9	4	
SCORE	TD	EP/M	FG/M	PTS	
Morris	9	0/0	0/0	54	
Metcalf	6	0/0	0/0	36	

it first in **GAMEPLAN** when this young product of SMU emerges as a 1,000-yard runner this season. Logical pick at Metcalf's old spot is veteran Otis, provided he sticks around, but we like the promise of George Franklin, who could make Card fans forget Terry (Who?) if he's back at top-form. The offensive line is A-one, with a change here or there maybe, but still one of the best at run and pass blocking. Now, the defensive line is that proverbial "horse-of-a-different-color" with Zook and Dawson clearly the best of a lackluster group. Pollard could help, especially with pass rushing, but more help than that is needed. Linebacking is just as suspect, and it wouldn't surprise us one bit if before the coming NFL sea-

1977 Regular Season Statistics		
	CARDINALS	OPP
FIRST DOWNS	247	258
NET RUSH	2042	2237
Avg Per Game	146	160
NET PASS	2490	2267
AH/Comp	366/195	375/198
Had Int	21	19
Avg Per Game	178	162
PUNTS/AVG	71/36.7	72/39.5
Punts Return/Yds	40/300	33/157
Avg Per Return	7.5	4.8
KICKOFF RET/YDS	59/1271	55/1104
Avg Per Return	21.5	20.1
FUMBLES/LOST	30/16	19/12
FIELD GOALS	7/16	17/26
PATS	35/36	32/34
TOTAL POINTS	272	287

son is over, the Cards try out more 'backer prospects than Carter's got little liver pills. The secondary is a bit more stable, led by Wehrli, provided the deep zone residents stay healthy because depth is mediocre. It's no garden-of-roses Wilkinson is walking into in St. Louis, just ask Don Coryell. But this is by no means a destitute football team. The biggest problem facing the former Oklahoma U. skipper is the one of familiarization with the players, the city, his new coaching assistants, the team executives, the fans and etc. Something that will take time even for the amiable Mr. Wilkinson to resolve, which leads us to believe his first edition of Cardinals should win about the same number of games they did in '77.

## New York Giants

1978 Schedule		
Sep 2	at Tampa Bay	
Sep 10	DALLAS	
Sep 17	KANSAS CITY	
Sep 24	SAN FRANCISCO	
Oct 1	at Atlanta	
Oct 8	at Dallas	
Oct 15	TAMPA BAY	
Oct 22	WASHINGTON	
Oct 29	at New Orleans	
Nov 5	at St. Louis	
Nov 12	at Washington	
Nov 19	PHILADELPHIA	
Nov 26	at Buffalo	
Dec 3	LOS ANGELES	
Dec 10	ST. LOUIS	
Dec 17	at Philadelphia	

(5-9-0)

Like they say in the carnival side-show, it was close but no cigar for last year's Giants, who came within just six points of logging a 7-7 record that would have been the team's best finish since 1972. Add 'em up. First, in the 13th game of the campaign, there was a 17-14 loss to Philadelphia—a contest the Eagles won in the last 20 seconds—followed by an equally narrow 12-9 overtime setback against the Chicago Bears in a game that looked more like ice hockey than football.

Yet all things considered, despite those

Giants	1977 Results	Opp
20	Washington	17
21	at Dallas	41
3	at Atlanta	17
10	Philadelphia	28
20	San Francisco	17
17	at Washington	6
0	at St. Louis	28
10	Dallas	24
10	at Tampa Bay	0
7	Cleveland	21
13	at Cincinnati	30
27	St. Louis	7
14	at Philadelphia	17
9	Chicago	12

losses and the subsequent 5-9 mark that resulted, there's a good reason for the Giants to be optimistic as they head into their second full year under Coach John McVay. This team has been on the upswing ever since McVay took the helm mid-way through the '76 season, and while a major improvement on their won-lost mark may be a bit much to expect this year, gone forever are the days when NFC East rivals like Dallas, St. Louis and Washington regarded playing the Giants as a scrimmage game.

The biggest hurdle for the Giants if



they are to continue to improve is putting some spark in their offense, which not only lacked firepower last season, but imagination as well. Run, run, pass and punt seemed to be the offensive format for the New Yorkers in '77, not a bad modus operandi if you're the Cowboys or the Oakland Raiders. But, hell, when you've got as many offensive shortcomings as the Giants, if you can't be productive, at least you can be exciting to watch!

**OFFENSE:** Barring the unexpected such as a trade, and last year's Steve Ramsey-for-Craig Morton disaster precludes such a notion, the starting quarterback will be Joe Pisarcik. And if your immediate response to that announcement is "Joe who?"—believe us, you're not alone.

Pisarcik, an unheralded free agent a year ago, ran the offensive show for the lion's share of the '77 campaign, connecting on 103 of 241 passes (42.7%) for 1,346 yards, four touchdowns and 14 interceptions. The rangy Pisarcik (6-3, 220) is entering his second NFL season after a three-year stint with Calgary in the Canadian league, and while he's got the strong arm to throw the ball deep and can run with the pigskin pretty well, his passing accuracy will have to improve before the Giants will be able to feel content with him at the signal calling spot.

The foremost reserve at quarterback is Jerry Golsteyn, another name not likely to ring a familiar bell with many NFL fans. Last season, second-year pro Golsteyn—who missed his entire rookie season ('76) with an injury—was able to hit on only 31 of 70 passes (for 416 yards, two touchdowns and eight interceptions), which tells you why he languished most of the year on the sidelines.

Heading up the pass catching brigade is wide receiver Jimmy Robinson, a guy the experts say is too small and too slow, yet still the team leader last season when he carried 22 aeriels for 422 yards and three touchdowns, including one scoring catch that covered 80 yards. Robinson is a gutsy kid who originally came to the Giants as a free agent, and some folks say he reminds you of Del Shofner, a former standout with the club the so-called experts also said was (yep, you guessed it) too slow and too small to make the grade.

Zooming out of the other wide receiving berth is Johnny Perkins, who raced under 20 spirals and hauled them for 279 yards last season. Perkins is a 9.8 sprinter with the speed and size (6-2, 205) to be an explosive long-distance pass catching threat. Now, if only the Giants can find a quarterback to get the ball to him on a regular basis.

Yet another second-year pro with great quickness, Emery Moorehead, is the top back-up at wide receiver, having caught 12 passes for 143 yards and one touchdown in '77. Also available is ex-WFLer Al Marshall, who averaged a sizzling 25.4 yards on seven catches last season, but whose NFL career has been plagued by injuries and erratic play.

Stationed at the tight end spot is Gary Shirk, who took over the starting job last season when long-time regular Bob Tucker was traded to Minnesota, responding with 16 receptions for 280

## New York Giants Rookie Roster

(Listed in order of selection)

NAME	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
King, Gordon	T	6-4	248	Stanford
McKinney, Odis	DB	6-2	178	Colorado
Taylor, Billy	RB	6-0	212	Texas Tech
Jackson, Terry	DB	5-10	184	San Diego St
Krahl, Jim	DT	6-5	250	Texas Tech
De Roo, Brian	WR	6-3	190	Redlands
Pass, Randy	G-C	6-2	232	Georgia Tech
Doornink, Dan	RB	6-2	198	Washington St
Grady, Jeff	LB	6-0	220	Florida A & M
Swiacki, Bill	TE	6-2	214	Amherst
Jorgensen, Greg	G	6-2	241	Nebraska
Heim, Dennis	DT	6-3	250	Southwest Missouri
Lawson, Greg	RB	5-9	185	Western Illinois

yards and two scores. Supplying depth at tight end is rangy Al Dixon (6-5, 220), a

promising second-year pro who had six catches in '77.

## New York Giants 1978 Veteran Roster

NO	NAME	POS	HT	WT	AGE	YR	COLLEGE	GAMES IN '77
77	Archer, Troy	DT	6-4	250	23	3	Colorado	14
25	Bell, Gordon	RB	5-9	180	25	3	Michigan	10
83	Brown, Boyd	TE	6-4	230	26	5	Alcorn St.	6
21	Bryant, Bill	CB	5-11	195	27	3	Grambling	14
53	Carson, Harry	LB	6-2	235	25	3	So. Carolina	14
61	Chandler, Karl	C	6-5	250	26	5	Princeton	14
39	Csonka, Larry	RB	6-3	235	32	10	Syracuse	14
18	Danelo, Joe	K	5-9	166	25	4	Washington	14
15	Dean, Randy	QB	6-3	195	23	2	Northwestern	1
84	Dixon, Al	TE	6-5	220	24	2	Iowa State	8
65	Ellenbogen, Bill	G	6-5	255	28	3	Virginia Tech.	12
79	Gibbons, Mike	G	6-4	262	27	3	S.W. Okla. St.	5
12	Golsteyn, Jerry	QB	6-4	210	24	2	No. Illinois	6
71	Gravelle, Gordon	T	6-5	252	29	7	Brigham Young	14
81	Gregory, Jack	DE	6-5	250	34	12	Delta State	14
33	Hammond, Bob	RB	5-10	170	26	3	Morgan State	14
30	Hart, Harold	RB	6-0	205	26	4	Texas Southern	1
74	Hicks, John	G	6-2	258	27	5	Ohio State	10
52	Hill, Ralph	C	6-1	245	29	3	Florida A&M	12
13	Jennings, Dave	P	6-4	205	26	5	St. Lawrence	14
70	Jeter, Gary	DT	6-4	260	23	2	Southern Cal	14
31	Jones, Ernie	S	6-3	180	25	3	Miami	14
55	Kelley, Brian	LB	6-3	222	27	6	Cal. Lutheran	13
44	Kotar, Doug	RB	5-11	205	27	5	Kentucky	12
54	Lloyd, Dan	LB	6-2	225	25	3	Washington	14
34	Mallory, Larry	S	5-11	185	26	3	Tennessee St.	14
51	Marion, Frank	LB	6-3	228	27	2	Florida A&M	3
89	Marshall, Ed	WR	6-5	200	31	4	Cameron St.	14
75	Martin, George	DE	6-4	245	25	4	Oregon	10
64	Mendenhall, John	DT	6-1	255	30	7	Grambling	14
62	Mikolajczyk, Ron	T	6-3	275	28	3	Tampa	13
80	Moorehead, Emery	WR	6-2	210	24	2	Colorado	13
73	Mullen, Tom	G	6-3	250	27	5	S.W. Missouri St.	8
86	Perkins, Johnny	WR	6-2	205	25	2	Abilene Christian	13
76	Pietrzak, Jim	DT	6-5	260	25	4	Eastern Mich.	14
9	Pisarcik, Joe	QB	6-4	220	26	2	New Mexico St.	13
29	Powers, Clyde	S	6-1	195	27	5	Oklahoma	14
28	Reece, Beasley	CB	6-1	193	24	3	No. Texas St.	10
22	Rhodes, Ray	CB	5-11	185	28	5	Tulsa	14
85	Robinson, Jimmy	WR	5-9	170	25	3	Georgia Tech	14
57	Selfridge, Andy	LB	6-3	220	29	6	Virginia	11
87	Shirk, Gary	TE	6-1	220	28	3	Morehead State	14
27	Spencer, Willie	RB	6-4	235	25	3	No. College	13
20	Stienke, Jim	S	5-11	182	28	6	S.W. Texas St.	14
68	Turner, J.T.	DT	6-3	250	25	2	Duke	13
63	Van Horn, Doug	T	6-3	245	34	12	Ohio State	14
10	Van Pelt, Brad	LB	6-5	235	27	6	Michigan St.	14
36	Watkins, Larry	RB	6-2	230	32	10	Alcorn State	9
24	White, Marsh	RB	6-2	220	25	3	Arkansas	0

Fueling the team's ground attack is scatback Bobby Hammond, who could be cast for the lead role in "The Me Nobody Knows" after exploding on the scene to lead the Giants with 577 rushing yards on 154 attempts last season. Hammond was even more effective as a kick returner in '77, when he finished second in the NFC at running back punts, carting 32 for a 10.4 yard average, including one 68-yard scoring dash. For sheer determination, Hammond is probably the hardest worker on the club, and he supplies the Giants with a commodity their rushing attack has lacked for many years—speed to the outside.

At the other running back, the alternating regulars are Doug Kotar, who rambled for 480 yards and two TDs last season, and 10-year veteran Larry Csonka, who notched 464 yards and one score. The burly Csonka, a former All-Pro with the Miami Dolphins, closed out the '77 campaign with a team-high 100-yard rushing performance against the Chicago Bears in that "ice bowl" game, but in all honesty, Zonk just hasn't been the same since he started having knee problems a few years back. The other veteran ball carrier on hand is another bruiser, 240-pound Willie Spencer, a good short-yardage man who tied for the team lead a year ago with three rushing touchdowns.

When you talk about the Giants lack of offensive might, a large part of the blame has to go to the front wall, which just doesn't supply the attack with the necessary blocking. About the most dependable lineman, in fact, possibly the only one, is 12-year guard stalwart Doug Van Horn, whom Coach McVay felt should have been selected to the Pro Bowl last year because of his steady play.

It's doubtful the team's other regular guard in '77, John Hicks, will be back again since he's let it be known he's unhappy playing with the Giants, and the team itself has mutual feelings. In the event Hicks is sent packing, the logical pick to man his old spot is Bill Ellenbogen, a free agent signee ('76) who toiled in the WFL early in his pro career. Also in the running for that spot, provided he can avoid the incapacitating injuries that have laid him low the past two years, is Tom Mullen, a one-time regular who could add some badly needed strength up front if only he could stay healthy.

Plugging one tackle hole is Ron Mikolajczyk, a steady if unspectacular performer, while stationed opposite him is third-year pro Mike Gibbons. Depth at the tackles is not that great, and the situation will be even more critical if ex-Pittsburgh Steeler Gordon Gravelle can't bounce back from an injury that sidelined him the latter part of the '77 campaign.

**DEFENSE:** As problem-plagued and undermanned as the Giant offensive unit is, that's how strong their defensive counterparts are, a paradox that accounts for the team's overall success last season despite their lackluster attack. In final NFC team statistics a year ago, the Giants finished 8th overall in total defense, and third in rushing defense (behind Dallas and the LA Rams), limiting enemy runners to a scant 126.6 yards-per-game.

The strength of NY's defense is their front wall, bulwarked by tackles John

Mendenhall and Troy Archer, who combine to form a virtual blockade on the inside. In addition, both have the mobility to be effective as pass rushers as well, allowing Mendenhall (11½) and Archer (10½) to finish 1-2 on the team in quarterback sacks last season.

Putting the crunch on enemy quarterbacks from one defensive line flank is 12-year veteran Jack Gregory, one of the most steady defenders in the NFC. On duty at the other end is George Martin, a rapidly improving four-year man with great quickness who pursues as well as anyone on the front wall.

The leading reserves in the line are Rick Dvorak and Gary Jeter, the team's No. 1 pick in the '77 college draft. Jeter was somewhat of a disappointment his rookie year, but he has all the tools—including size (6-4, 235) and quickness (4.7 in the 40)—to be a standout down lineman if he starts playing with intensity all the time.

The Giants are in just as good shape at the linebacking spots, where the leader is six-year veteran Brad Van Pelt, selected to play in the last two Pro Bowls. Van Pelt, who holds forth at the strong side 'backer spot, is equally adept at defending the pass or the run, and he's one of the NFL's finest at his position.

Stationed at the opposite, or weak side, linebacking spot is Brian Kelley. Kelley's another steady veteran who, like Van Pelt, is entering his sixth NFL season, and he should continue to excel at his position for a number of years more.

Third-year pro Harry Carson, one of the finest though least acknowledged middle men in the league, rounds out the linebacking corps. Last season, for the second time in his brief pro career, Carson was in on over 100 tackles, and at a muscular 235-pounds, when he hits an enemy ball carrier, they really know they've been hit!

The only weak area in NY's otherwise outstanding defense is the secondary, held largely responsible for the fact enemy passers rolled up 149.8 yards-per-game and completed 56.4% of their aerial attempts last season. It's possible that, with added time and work, the secondary crew may improve, but it would not be at all surprising to see the Giants make some major personnel switches before too long.

Top interceptor Bill Bryant, who swiped three in '77 and ran one back 54-yards for a touchdown, is at one corner-back spot. Working the corner on the other side is five-year pro Ray Rhodes, who shifted from wide receiver to the defensive secondary last season and paid dearly for his lack of experience. A top priority for the Giants is to get a better performance from this duo, but unless that occurs, both may find themselves out of jobs before this season is too old.

Many of the same things can be said about the safety combo of Clyde Powers (strong) and Jim Stienke (free), both of whom are aggressive enough but lack the quickness needed to guard the team's last line of defense. Supplying depth at safety is Larry Mallory, who has good speed but very little experience.

The Giants boast a first-rate punter in five-year pro Dave Jennings, and he more than earned his pay last season when he was called on to do his thing a team-record 100 times, responding with a 39.9

yard average. Place kicking duties are the province of Joe Danelo, who was accurate on 19 of 20 extra points and 14 of 23 field goals in '77. Danelo is a fairly good placement man overall but he has a tendency to hook the ball on short attempts, thus missing a lot of three-pointers that really should be easy pickings.

**GAMEPLAN CONCLUSION:** Oh, if only Coach John McVay had an entire team that performed as well as NY's defensive unit—except, that is, for the secondary crew. But, unfortunately, such is not the case and until McVay can find some way to light a fire under the Giant offense, his team will continue to struggle. Sure, with young players like Pisarcik, Hammond, Perkins, Moorehead and Dixon on the attack, there's hope the offense can start to get untracked this season. But unless there's something we completely overlooked, we honestly doubt it, which means another year of all-defense and very little offense for the Giants. Quarterback Pisarcik is a raw talent with good natural ability, a plus in and of itself, although we really can't see him suddenly emerging as the kind of signal caller who will make Giant fans forget the Charlie Conerlys and Y.A. Tittles of yesteryear. Yes, we do think Pisarcik will improve—as both a passer and leader—with added experience, but we don't think that will happen overnight. Nor do we think it will happen this season, for that matter. And speaking of offense, there's also the pressing need for quality running backs to bolster a ground attack that averaged only 135.5 yards-per-game last season. And don't forget the offensive line, either, where help is needed at almost every position. Now, over on defense, there's quality galore as long as you don't look too long and too hard at the secondary, which most assuredly is due to undergo some drastic changes before this season is over. The front wall is top-notch all the way, although it should be noted that stalwarts Jack Gregory and John Mendenhall have played out their options, and thus entered the free agent market. We seriously doubt the Giants will let either one of those guys get away from them, which should ensure that the strongest part of the defensive unit again this season will be found up front. The linebacking crew is an outstanding one, as well, led by All-Pro prospects like Van Pelt and Carson. Depth at the 'backer positions, though, is not all that wonderful, so Coach McVay had better hope that his regular three-some stays healthy or problems will develop. In the secondary, well... remember former Giant greats like Em Tunnell, Erich Barnes and Dick Lynch? They'd be downright embarrassed by the way this present-day gang plays, which means any or all of the regulars may not be around come the end of this season. Embarking on what will be his second full year at the team's helm, Coach McVay's gridders have the potential to win more games than they did last fall. However, in so far as their challenging for the NFC East title is concerned, the Giants will find that a near impossible task.

We picked Dallas by 14  
THEY WON BY 17  
See page 65



# NFC CENTRAL



Chicago's Walter "Sweetness" Payton blasts through the Packer defense.

# Minnesota Vikings

(9-5-0)

It seems to get a little tougher every year, but the cagey old Vikings—the NFL's Geritol for lunch bunch—always find a way to get the job done. Like last season, for example, when the Vikes played part of the campaign without the services of All-Pro guard Ed White, a holdout, then lost record-setting quarterback Fran Tarkenton with an injury. Yet, they still managed to win the NFC Central title and claim their fifth consecutive playoff berth.

And then wouldn't you know it, Coach Bud Grant's team proceeded to upset Los Angeles, 14-7, and at LA to boot, in a first round playoff tilt before falling to the powerful Dallas Cowboys (23-6) in the NFC title game. How do the Vikings do it—year-in and year-out—grey hair, aching bones, injuries and all?

Well, it's a pretty simple formula really. It consists of one-part championship experience, two-parts winning the games they have to, and one very large portion of that old intangible known as sheer desire. When you've been around as long as many of the Viking players have, and gotten so used to winning, it instills a certain team pride (in this case, "Purple Pride") that may not show up in the game statistics, but most assuredly does on the scoreboard.

Heading into the '78 NFL season, for some Minnesota players like Tarkenton (18th year) and defensive end Jim Marshall (19th) nearly their second decade in the league, the Vikings are a bit more battle-scarred. A little older and, thus, that much closer to the end of the line, but still a team to be reckoned with in the race for both their divisional and the National Conference title.

**OFFENSE:** Running the show once again offensively for the Vikes is the redoubtable Mr. Tarkenton, his leg healed, his competitive edge at its peak and his skills just as evident as they have been since he arrived in the NFL as the "Georgia Peach" those many years ago. Before his injury last season in the team's ninth game of the campaign against Cincinnati, Tark was having his usual brilliant year with 155 pass completions in 258 attempts (60.1%) for 1,734 yards and nine touchdowns.

At the age of 37, Tarkenton still has surprising mobility and a lively passing arm, and when you toss in the man's vast experience as a pro, it's easy to see why he's regarded as one of the game's premier signal callers. Granted, the days when he was known as the ebullient "Frantic Francis" are a thing of the past, but with premium blockers such as the Vikings have to protect him, Tark doesn't have to scramble for life-and-limb such as he did during the early part of his career.

In reserve at quarterback, the Vikes have 10-year pro Bob Lee, who stepped in when Tarkenton was injured last season, drilling strikes on 42 of 72 aeriels (58.3%) for 522 yards and four touchdowns. Lee is a seasoned veteran who demonstrated a

## 1978 Schedule

Sep 3	at New Orleans
Sep 11	DENVER
Sep 17	TAMPA BAY
Sep 25	at Chicago
Oct 1	at Tampa Bay
Oct 8	at Seattle
Oct 15	LOS ANGELES
Oct 22	GREEN BAY
Oct 26	at Dallas
Nov 5	DETROIT
Nov 12	CHICAGO
Nov 19	SAN DIEGO
Nov 26	at Green Bay
Dec 3	PHILADELPHIA
Dec 9	at Detroit
Dec 17	at Oakland

year ago that, if need be, he can get the job done. Having him around is just like money in the bank.

Also on call is second-year man Tommy Kramer, a glowing young prospect who looms as the team's quarterback of the future. Kramer, the Vikes' No. 1 pick in last year's college draft, is a strong-armed kid with the ability and temperament to develop into a standout NFL signal caller, and his '77 passing stats (30 of 57 for 425 yards and five touchdowns, including a 69-yard scoring strike to Sammy White) are clearly an indication of what great potential he has.

There are many experts who maintain that, in Sammy White and Ahmad Rashad, the Vikes possess the finest pair of wide receivers in pro football, an assessment that isn't about to get much of an argument from this corner. A year ago, the mercurial White sprinted for 758 yards and nine touchdowns on 41

Vikings	1977 Results	Opp
10	Dallas	16
9	at Tampa Bay	3
19	Green Bay	7
14	Detroit	7
22	Chicago	16
3	at Los Angeles	35
14	at Atlanta	7
7	St. Louis	27
42	Cincinnati	10
7	at Chicago	10
13	at Green Bay	6
28	San Francisco	27
13	at Oakland	35
30	at Detroit	21

receptions, and his 18.5 yard per catch average ranked him up among the league leaders.

Zooming out of the other wide receiving berth, his running mate Rashad led the '77 Vikings with 51 catches, which he carried for 681 yards and two scores. Backstopping that dynamic duo at wide receiver is 11-year veteran Bob Grim, who averaged 21.7 yards on three receptions a year ago. After that, however, the team is pretty thin in reserve strength at this position, so a major outbreak of injuries could create some serious problems.

Hard-blocking Stu Voigt, a good clutch receiver, holds forth at the tight end spot, last season hauling in 20 aeriels for 212 yards and one touchdown. Providing depth are ex-NY Giant standout Bob Tucker, an eight-year pro who had 9 catches for 109 yards and two scores in '77, and four-year veteran Steve Craig.

When it comes to Minnesota's rushing attack, the name you mention first, last and foremost is that of Chuck Foreman, probably the most versatile running back in the game. Via the ground route last season, Foreman bolted for 1,112 yards (his third consecutive 1,000-yard campaign) on 270 carries and punched into enemy end zones six times. And just to add some icing to the cake, he also latched onto 38 passes (third most on the team), three of which went for touchdowns.

Barrelling out of the other running back position is five-year pro Brent

**Don't pay  
in July and pray  
in October.**

See Page 127

## Minnesota Vikings Rookie Roster

(Listed in order of selection)

NAME	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
Holloway, Randy	DE	6-6	228	Pittsburgh
Turner, John	DB	6-0	189	Miami (Fla)
Walton, Whip	LB	6-3	229	San Diego St
Hough, Jim	C	6-2	254	Utah State
Wood, Mike	K	6-0	181	S.E. Missouri St
Deutsch, Mike	P	6-1	199	Colorado St
Harris, Ron	RB	5-9	193	Colorado St
Morrow, Jeff	T	6-5	243	Minnesota



McClanahan, a super blocker who notched 324 yards rushing and snagged 34 passes last season. McClanahan sat out the latter part of the campaign with a knee injury that required surgical repairs, but an off-season rehabilitation program has put him back in top-form.

In reserve at running back, the Vikes have fairly good personnel, although obviously there would be problems if big gun Chuck Foreman were to be incapacitated by injury. Third on the team in rushing last season was Sammy Johnson who racked up 217 yards, followed by Robert Miller (152 yards) and ex-WFLer Mark Kellar (15 yards). Also available is explosive four-year pro Manfred Moore, a kick return specialist who averaged 5.9 yards on 47 punt returns and 21.8 yards on 24 kickoff runbacks a year ago, leading the Vikings in both categories.

Anyone knowledgeable in the whys and wherefores of pro football is aware that a team can't have a successful attack without a first-rate offensive line, and that the Vikings have. The wheelhorse up front is center Mick Tingelhoff, a 16-year veteran who isn't terribly big, nor awfully fast, but still mans the pivot as well as anyone around. At the age of 37, Tingelhoff is giving some thought to hanging 'em up as an active player, and if he goes through with those plans, his spot will be taken over by top apprentice Doug Dumler, who handles the snapping on kicking downs.

Blowing open holes from the guard positions are the afore-mentioned Ed White, who made the NFC Pro Bowl squad last year despite his self-imposed layoff early in the campaign, and rugged five-year pro Charles Goodrum. The Vikes boast exceptional depth at guard in Wes Hamilton, who filled in well last season during White's absence, and Dennis Swilley, a second-year man with good speed and the potential to be a future regular.

Stationed at one tackle spot is perennial Pro Bowler Ron Yary, still a formidable blocker despite ten years of being pounded, gouged and generally beaten upon by enemy defensive linemen. Opposite him is another stalwart, four-year pro Steve Riley. But, the Vikings are hurting for reserve strength at tackle, which might prove troublesome.

**DEFENSE:** What's left to say about Minnesota's defensive unit, especially their heralded front four, the Purple People Eaters? Over the years, they've played as well as any group of defenders the NFL has ever seen, and on their outstanding play has the team's championship success always been built. But then, how could it be any other way in pro football!

Shutting down sweeps and putting the sack on enemy passers from the line flanks are Carl Eller and Jim Marshall, names that have become household words over the years. Eller is a mobile 250-pounder who, sideline to sideline, pursues as well as any flanker in the league, but Marshall is the guy whose success story would make Horatio Alger envious. Supposedly too old (39 as of this writing) and too small (220 pounds), Marshall never ceases to amaze with his outstanding play and fiery spirit, and if he

1977 LEADERS					
PASS	A/C	INT	YDS	TD	
Tarkenton	258/155	14	1734	9	
Lee	72/42	4	522	4	
REC	NO	YDS	AVG	TD	
Rashad	51	681	13.4	2	
White, S.	41	758	18.5	9	
INT	NO	YDS	AVG	TD	
Bryant	4	44	11.0	0	
Wright, N.	3	0	-	0	
RUSH	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD	
Foreman	270	1112	4.1	6	
McClanahan	95	324	3.4	1	
PUNT	NO	YDS	AVG	BK	
Clabo	83	3302	39.8	10	
SCORE	TD	EP/M	FG/M	PTS	
White, S.	9	0/0	0/0	54	
Foreman	9	0/0	0/0	54	

1977 Regular Season Statistics		
	VIKINGS	OPP
FIRST DOWNS	244	212
NET RUSH	1821	2222
Avg Per Game	130.1	158.7
NET PASS	2368	1581
Att/Comp	388/228	310/149
Had Int	22	16
Avg Per Game	169.1	112.9
PUNTS/AVG	83/39.8	92/37.1
Punts Return/Yds	58/346	42/508
Avg Per Return	6.0	12.1
KICKOFF RET/YDS	45/834	48/999
Avg Per Return	18.5	20.8
FUMBLES/LOST	36/24	22/12
FIELD GOALS	8/17	7/17
PATS	25/28	26/29
TOTAL POINTS	231	227

keeps on going at this rate he won't be able to make anymore of those "nobody knows me" commercials for American Express!

Providing support at defensive end is young stalwart Mark Mullaney. Mullaney, a former No. 1 draftee ('75) has the size and quickness to nail down a full-time job with almost any other NFL

team, but he'll continue to serve a backup role until regulars Eller and Marshall get ready to call it quits.

Inside at the tackle berths, the Vikes are just as well-heeled, where Alan Page and Doug Sutherland are stationed. Page is an agile 14-year veteran who gets all the ink because of his exciting style of play, but his "stay at home" partner,

#### Minnesota Vikings 1978 Veteran Roster

NO	NAME	POS	HT	WT	AGE	YR	COLLEGE	GAMES
								IN '77
25	Allen, Nate	CB	5-11	174	30	8	Texas Southern	14
21	Blahak, Joe	CB	5-10	185	28	6	Nebraska State	12
59	Blair, Matt	LB	6-5	229	27	5	Iowa State	14
20	Bryant, Bobby	CB	6-1	170	34	10	South Carolina	14
12	Clabo, Neil	P	6-2	200	26	4	Tennessee	14
84	Craig, Steve	TE	6-3	231	27	5	Northwestern	14
7	Danmeier, Rick	K	6-0	183	26	2	Sioux Falls (S.D.)	1
57	Dumler, Doug	C	6-3	242	28	6	Nebraska	14
81	Eller, Carl	DE	6-6	247	36	15	Minnesota	14
44	Foreman, Chuck	RB	6-2	207	28	6	Miami (Fla.)	14
68	Goodrum, Charles	T	6-3	256	28	6	Florida A & M	14
26	Grim, Bob	WR	6-0	188	33	12	Oregon State	14
61	Hamilton, Wes	G	6-3	255	25	3	Tulsa	14
45	Hannon, Tom	S	5-11	193	23	2	Michigan State	12
58	Hilgenberg, Wally	LB	6-3	229	36	15	Iowa	11
76	Jackson, Joe	DT	6-4	262	28	4	New Mexico State	3
48	Johnson, Sammy	RB	6-1	226	26	5	North Carolina	14
39	Kellar, Mark	RB	6-0	225	26	3	Northern Illinois	14
9	Kramer, Tommy	QB	6-1	199	23	2	Rice	6
22	Krause, Paul	S	6-3	205	36	15	Iowa	14
19	Lee, Bob	QB	6-2	195	32	10	Pacific	5
70	Marshall, Jim	DE	6-4	240	41	19	Ohio State	14
33	McClanahan, Brent	RB	5-10	202	28	6	Arizona State	14
54	McNeill, Fred	LB	6-2	229	26	5	UCLA	14
35	Miller, Robert	RB	5-11	204	25	4	Kansas	14
36	Moore, Manfred	RB	6-0	200	28	5	Southern Calif.	12
77	Mullaney, Mark	DE	6-6	242	25	4	Colorado State	14
88	Page, Alan	DT	6-4	245	33	12	Notre Dame	14
28	Rashad, Ahmad	WR	6-2	200	29	6	Oregon	14
78	Riley, Steve	T	6-6	258	26	5	Southern Calif.	14
50	Siemon, Jeff	LB	6-3	237	28	7	Stanford	14
55	Studwell, Scott	LB	6-2	224	24	2	Illinois	14
69	Sutherland, Doug	DT	6-3	250	30	9	Superior St. (Wisc)	14
67	Swilley, Dennis	G	6-3	241	23	2	Texas A&M	14
10	Tarkenton, Fran	QB	6-0	185	38	18	Georgia	9
53	Tingelhoff, Mick	C	6-2	240	38	17	Nebraska	14
38	Tucker, Bob	TE	6-3	230	33	9	Bloomsburg State	8
83	Viogt, Stu	TE	6-1	225	30	9	Wisconsin	14
62	White, Ed	G	6-3	270	31	10	California	13
72	White, James	DT	6-3	263	25	3	Oklahoma State	14
85	White, Sammy	WR	5-11	189	24	3	Grambling	14
29	Wise, Phil	S	6-0	193	29	7	Nebraska (Omaha)	13
23	Wright, Jeff	S	5-11	190	29	8	Minnesota	14
43	Wright, Nate	CB	5-11	180	31	10	San Diego State	14
73	Yary, Ron	T	6-6	255	32	11	Southern Calif.	14

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Sutherland, is just as solid a defender.

In reserve at tackle, there's James (Duck) White and Joe Jackson. White is a 260-pound blockbuster who hasn't developed as quickly as the Vikes had hoped when they drafted him No. 1 in '76, but the sky's the limit for this young man once he hits his stride.

Backing up the middle of the line is hard-nosed Jeff Siemon, a four-time Pro Bowl selection slowed a bit by a calf injury last season, but still one of the better "mike" men in the business. He's backed up by second-year pro Scott Studwell, who filled in and did an outstanding job last season when Siemon needed a breather. Studwell has a bright future ahead of him.

The outside linebacking spots are manned by a pair of relative young 'uns by the Vikings standards, Matt Blair (26) and Fred McNeil (25). And both are just about at the right age where they're ready to emerge as dominant figures at their respective positions. Supporting them is an elder statesman more in keeping with the team's image, 35-year-old Wally Hilgenberg, a former regular who can fill in at either one of the outside 'backer positions.

Bouyed by the fierce pass rush of the front four, the Minnesota defensive secondary is an outstanding one, albeit one that is beginning to show some signs of aging. Pacing the crew in the deep zones is rough-and-tumble cornerback Bobby Bryant, team leader in interceptions last season with four, and the best open-field tackler on the team. At the age of 33, Bryant is no spring chicken anymore, but what he lacks in speed, he more than makes up for in savvy.

Operating at the other corner is ten-year veteran Nate Wright, who had three pass thefts a year ago. Depth at cornerback consists of journeyman Joe Blahak and second-year pro Tom Hannon, a high draft pick last year (third round) who should be a candidate for starting duties once he picks up some additional experience.

On duty at free safety is 15-year pro Paul Krause, truly one of the best and most durable defensive backs in NFL history. Last season, Krause intercepted two enemy passes to lift his career total to 78, and he only needs two more pass thefts to surpass former great Em Tunnell (79) as the greatest all-time aerial thief in NFL history.

Opposite him at the strong safety spot is Jeff Wright, a tough operator and one of the hardest hitters on the team. Supporting him is Phil Wise, a former regular with the NY Jets.

When it comes to the kicking game, the Vikings have a fine punter in Neil Clabo, who averaged 39.8 yards on 83 boots last season. But the placekicking job is up-in-the-air following the retirement of longtime standout Fred Cox, who hung 'em up at the end of last season after drilling 8 of 17 field goals and 25 of 28 extra points. Cox wrapped up his NFL career as the league's No. 2 all-time scorer, and while the Vikes may be able to find an adequate replacement for him, it just won't seem the same to see someone besides No. 14 trotting onto the field to try a field goal or point after for Minnesota.

**GAMEPLAN CONCLUSION:** Well,

this is the year of indecision for the Vikings—the year in which they will really have to demonstrate their dominance in the NFC Central. Can they do it? It's not out of the question, that's for sure, but if any other team wants to wrest away the divisional title now's the time to do it. We've got a hunch that, before the '78 NFL season is over, the Vikings will undergo a number of changes in personnel, not so much out of need, but out of requirement. On offense, the all-important quarterbacking spot will probably be manned by veteran Tarkenton, although now is as good a time as any to start thinking about a future replacement. Our instinct tells us young Tommy Kramer is the guy to do the job, but his lack of pro experience is bound to be a problem at this time. At running back, as long as Chuck Foreman stays hale and hearty, everything will be fine, and the rest of the offense is first-rate at all the important positions. Defensively, there's

no denying the Vikings are getting up there in age, and it just may create some problems before too long. How soon? That depends on people like Marshall, Krause and etc., who no matter how you look at it, are getting to that point where retirement goes from being a possibility to a cold, stark reality. Placekicker Fred Cox is gone, can some of the others be that far behind? The proverbial question mark, then, is applicable to the '78 Vikings, who have had their day in the sun but may be on the verge of slipping back a bit. However, we don't think "the fall" will come that suddenly or that dramatically for the Vikings. Their tremendous pride dictates otherwise and, unless we miss our guess, Minnesota will extend its reign in the NFC Central and advance to the playoffs again. But gone forever are those harlequin days when the Vikings could just about guarantee a divisional title and a playoff berth for their fans.

## Chicago Bears

### 1978 Schedule

Sep 3	ST. LOUIS
Sep 10	at San Francisco
Sep 17	at Detroit
Sep 25	MINNESOTA
Oct 1	OAKLAND
Oct 8	at Green Bay
Oct 16	at Denver
Oct 22	at Tampa Bay
Oct 29	DETROIT
Nov 5	SEATTLE
Nov 12	at Minnesota
Nov 19	ATLANTA
Nov 26	TAMPA BAY
Dec 4	at San Diego
Dec 10	GREEN BAY
Dec 16	at Washington

(9-5-0)

Outside of the Carter brothers, drawlin' Jimmy and beer-guzzling Billy, perhaps no other individual had his name in the headlines so often last year. We're referring to Walter Payton, or just plain "Sweetness" to his Chicago teammates, the guy the Almighty Creator must have had in mind when it came to making the perfect running back. And if the magical "Sweetness" puts together a few more seasons like the one he enjoyed in '77, there's a 50-50 chance they'll change the name of the stadium where the Bears play their home games from Soldier Field to "Payton Place."

There probably isn't another single player in all of pro football so vital to his team's success as Payton, the "moving force" last season when the Bears logged their best won-lost mark since 1965 and made their first playoff appearance in 14 years. Sure, the Windy City gridders got bombed out of the playoffs by Dallas (37-7) in a first round game, but that's nothing to be ashamed of since the Cowboys did the same thing to a lot of other teams in their relentless march to the Super Bowl title.

It's just getting there to begin with that

Bears	1977 Results	Opp
30	Detroit	20
13	at St. Louis	16
24	New Orleans	42
24	Los Angeles	23
16	at Minnesota	22
10	Atlanta	16
26	at Green Bay	0
0	at Houston	47
28	Kansas City	27
10	Minnesota	7
31	at Detroit	14
10	at Tampa Bay	0
21	Green Bay	10
12	at N.Y. Giants	9

counts most where the playoffs are concerned. A feat the Bears were able to accomplish in '77 and could again this year if the wondrous Mr. Payton continues doing his thing.

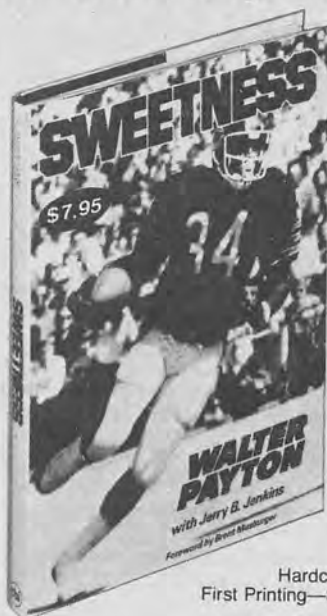
Oh, and before we forget, the Bears will have a new skipper leading them into this season, Neill Armstrong. Armstrong, for the past eight years a defensive assistant with the Minnesota Vikings, was appointed Chicago's head coach when Jack Pardee packed up his kit bag and split for Washington to boss the Redskins. But we doubt the change in leaders will affect the Bears very much. At least, not while Walter Payton is still around!

**OFFENSE:** Only someone who spent the last football season snowbound in the Swiss Alps would have to ask what it was that Payton did to merit so much publicity. For openers, there were his 1,852 yards rushing in '77, the third highest single season total in NFL history. And his 339 rushing attempts, the most ever in one year by a ball carrier, eclipsing the previous record of 332 by O. J. Simpson in 1973.

Then, there was Payton's brilliant 275-yard rushing performance against the

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B501



Minnesota Vikings last November 20th, an all-time record for a single game. Toss in the fact he also finished second on the team with 27 pass receptions in '77, blocked like a demon when he wasn't carrying the ball, and just generally had the kind of year most players only dream about.

Embarking on his fourth pro season, Payton has clearly established himself as the premier runner in the NFL. It makes you nervous to see him carry the mail 25 to 30 times a game because the injury rate at running back is very high. And should anything happen (God forbid!) to Payton, Chicago's offense would be like your automobile if you removed the engine—kaput.

Rambling out of the other running back spot is bruising Roland Harper, who belted for 457 yards in '77 but whose major contribution is his blocking. There's decent depth at running back in Robin Earl and Johnny Musso, provided of course they aren't called upon to fill Payton's enormous shoes for any length of time. The 245-pound Earl is a hard-nosed ball carrier with good agility for his size, and he should make a big push for a regular job.

The triggerman on offense is quarterback Bob Avellini, who amassed 2,004 yards and 11 touchdowns via the air lanes last season, completing 154 of 293 passes. Avellini still has a tendency to force his passes (18 interceptions in '77) when discretion would be the better part of valor, but all things considered, he's a proficient young signal caller who should be around to run the attack for several more years.

Veteran Mike Phipps, picked up in a trade with the Cleveland Browns last year, is the most experienced quarterback in reserve, although he barely got his feet wet (3 of 5 pass attempts) in his first season with the Bears. Also on hand is Vince Evans, a second-year pro who so far has only seen action as a kick returner.

The bellwether when it comes to running down forward passes is wide receiver James Scott, second in the NFC last season when he zipped under 50 aerials, which he carried for 809 yards and three TDs. Opposite him at the other wide spot is Bo Rather, who averaged 17.3 yards on 17 receptions a year ago.

The reserve situation at wide receiver is something of a question mark, consisting of Steve Schubert, Steve Rivera and Brian Baschnagel. By far, the most promising of that threesome is Baschnagel, who caught four passes and was averaging 24.2 yards on kickoff returns (including an 84-yard scoring gallop) last season before he went down with an injury. If he's healthy again, Baschnagel will considerably brighten the picture at wide receiver and might even be able to beat out one of the regulars at the wide spots.

Greg Latta, who came into his own as a pass receiver in '77 with 26 catches and a team-high four touchdown receptions, is on duty at tight end. Backing him up are Bob Parsons and Chuck Bradley. Parsons also serves as the team's punter, having averaged 40.4 yards on 80 kicks last season.

Up front in the trenches, there's a bevy of outstanding blockers on duty, and record-setting ball carrier Walter Payton would be the first to tell you he wouldn't

## Chicago Bears Rookie Roster

(Listed in order of selection)

NAME	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
Shearer, Brad	DT	6-4	259	Texas
Skibinski, John	RB	6-2	204	Purdue
Ileremia, Mekeli	DE	6-3	235	Brigham Young
Jones, Herman	WR	6-3	200	Ohio State
Freitas, George	TE	6-3	215	California
Martin, Mike	LB	6-1	212	Kentucky
Zambiasi, Ben	LB	6-1	200	Georgia
Underwood, Walt	DE	6-4	220	Southern Cal
Sibley, Lew	LB	6-1	228	Louisiana St

be as successful if it weren't for the line. The anchors in the front wall are tackles Dennis Lick and Ted Albrecht, both gifted young linemen with All-Pro potential.

Stationed at the guard holes are Noah

Jackson and Revie Sorey, a pair of durable veterans, with the pivot spot occupied by Dan Peiffer. There's good reserve strength available at the tackle spots with Dan Jiggetts and Lionel Antoine, out last year with an injury. Dan Neal is a compe-

## Chicago Bears 1978 Veteran Roster

NO	NAME	POS	HT	WT	AGE	YR	COLLEGE	GAMES
								IN '77
64	Albrecht, Ted	T-G	6-4	253	24	2	California	14
72	Andrews, John	DE	6-6	251	27	4	Morgan State	0
79	Antoine, Lionel	T	6-6	263	28	6	S'thern Illinois	0
7	Avellini, Bob	QB	6-2	206	25	4	Maryland	14
84	Baschnagel, Brian	WR-KR	6-0	193	24	3	Ohio State	10
25	Best, Art	RB-KR	6-1	205	25	2	Kent State	14
81	Bradley, Chuck	TE	6-6	235	28	4	Oregon	8
50	Bryant, Waymond	LB	6-3	239	26	5	Tennessee ST	13
55	Buffone, Doug	LB	6-2	227	34	12	Louisville	13
59	Campbell, Gary	LB	6-1	218	26	2	Colorado	14
60	Chambers, Wally	DT-DE	6-6	260	26	6	E'tern Kentucky	4
43	Clemons, Craig	S	5-11	191	29	7	Iowa	13
63	Dean, Fred	G	6-3	253	23	2	Texas S'thern	0
39	Earl, Robin	RB-P	6-5	242	23	2	Washington	14
48	Ellis, Allan	CB	5-10	175	27	6	UCLA	14
8	Evans, Vince	QB-KR	6-2	216	23	2	S'thern Cal	7
45	Fencik, Gary	S	6-1	192	24	3	Yale	14
35	Harper, Roland	RB	5-11	209	25	4	Louisiana Tech	11
73	Hartenstine, Mike	DE	6-3	257	25	4	Penn State	14
54	Hicks, Tom	LB	6-4	225	26	3	Illinois	12
65	Jackson, Noah	G	6-2	273	27	4	Tampa	14
62	Jiggetts, Dan	T	6-4	276	24	3	Harvard	12
88	Latta, Greg	TE	6-3	230	26	4	Morgan State	14
70	Lick, Dennis	T	6-3	268	24	3	Wisconsin	14
24	Livers, Virgil	CB-KR	5-8	178	26	4	W'tern Kentucky	14
74	Meyers, Jerry	DE	6-4	245	24	3	N'thern Illinois	13
58	Muckensturn, Jerry	LB	6-4	226	25	3	Arkansas St	14
22	Musso, Johnny	RB-KR	5-11	196	28	4	Alabama	14
52	Neal, Dan	C-G	6-4	248	29	6	Kentucky	14
87	Newson, Billy	DE	6-5	250	30	9	Grambling	14
68	Osborne, Jim	DT	6-3	251	29	7	Southern	13
86	Parsons, Bob	TE-P	6-5	232	28	7	Penn State	14
34	Payton, Walter	RB-KR	5-10	205	24	4	Jackson St	14
53	Peiffer, Dan	C	6-3	251	27	4	SE Missouri St	14
15	Phipps, Mike	QB	6-3	211	31	9	Purdue	3
46	Plank, Doug	S	5-11	201	25	4	Ohio State	11
80	Rather, Bo	WR	6-1	189	28	6	Michigan	13
83	Rivera, Steve	WR	5-11	190	24	3	California	4
57	Rives, Don	LB	6-2	231	27	5	Texas Tech	14
51	Rogers, Mel	LB	6-2	230	31	6	Florida A&M	5
76	Rydalch, Ron	DT	6-4	257	26	4	Utah	14
44	Schmidt, Terry	CB-S	6-0	176	26	5	Ball State	10
85	Schubert, Steve	WR-KR	5-10	188	27	5	Massachusetts	13
89	Scott, James	WR-KR	6-1	191	26	3	Henderson J. C.	14
75	Sevy, Jeff	DE-G	6-5	261	28	4	California	12
69	Sorey, Revie	G	6-2	259	25	4	Illinois	14
47	Spivey, Mike	CB-KR	6-0	194	24	2	Colorado	14
71	Stillwell, Roger	DE	6-6	250	27	4	Stanford	5
16	Thomas, Bob	K	5-10	174	26	4	Notre Dame	14
23	Walterscheid, Len	S-KR	5-11	185	24	2	S'thern Utah St	14

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tent back-up at center. However, the only halfway experienced guard on reserve call is Fred Dean, and it would behoove the Bears to shore up this area with some trades.

**DEFENSE:** No pro football team can hope to enjoy success without a stout-hearted defense, and the Bears do pretty well in that respect, thank-you. The real strength of Chicago's stop troops is their ability to shut down enemy passing attacks, having led the NFL last season by allowing only seven scoring aeriels. They were the only team in the league to hold opponents under double figures in that department.

Crashing in from the line flanks are Mike Hartenstine and Billy Newsome, who teamed up for six quarterback sacks in '77. Supplying depth at the terminals are Jeff Sevy and Roger Stillwell. Stillwell, a regular until he missed last season with an injury, should be able to re-claim a starting job, and his presence will bolster the pass rush.

Rough-and-tumble Ron Rydalch, who led the team in sacks with 9½ and recorded 77 total tackles last season, is anchored at one tackle spot. Holding forth at the other tackle is veteran Jim Osborne, a steady performer, while in reserve is Jerry Meyers.

However, all figuring in the proceedings at tackle will be Wally Chambers, a former All-Pro who sat out most of last season with a bad knee. Chambers is currently a free agent open to bids from other teams, but so far no one has been anxious to sign him up because there's some doubt whether he's fully recovered from his injury. This could very well mean he'll stay with the Bears at least for one more season, and if he sets out to prove he's really back to peak-form, he'll be a devastating force in the middle of the front wall.

At the linebacking spots, the leader is 12-year pro Doug Buffone, the only current member of the Bears who dates back to the time "Papa Bear" George Halas was still coaching the team. Buffone is a savage hitter who can stop an enemy ball carrier cold in his tracks, and what he may lack in quickness, he more than makes up for with the kind of veteran savvy that helps him anticipate better than younger players.

Stationed at the other outside linebacking spot is Waymond Bryant, an in-and-out performer who can play some outstanding defense but doesn't always produce with consistency. The foremost back-ups on the outside are Jerry Muckerstrum, Mel Rogers and Gary Campbell.

There's a two-way battle shaping up for the starting job at middle linebacker, pitting Tom Hicks and Don Rives, who alternated at the spot last season. However, unless one of them emerges as a dominant figure in the middle, something that's essential for a solid linebacking corps, the Bears may start looking around for some fresh talent at this position.

Like we mentioned earlier, the Bears led the league a year ago by limiting opponents to only seven touchdowns via the passing lanes. The four biggest reasons for that success were the tight guarding regulars who make up the secondary.

#### 1977 LEADERS

PASS	A/C	INT	YDS	TD
Avellini	293/154	18	2004	11
Parsons	4/4	0	61	0
REC	NO	YDS	AVG	TD
Scott	50	809	16.2	3
Payton	27	269	10.0	2
INT	NO	YDS	AVG	TD
Ellis	6	23	3.8	0
Fencik	4	33	8.3	0
RUSH	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
Payton	339	1852	5.5	14
Harper	120	457	3.8	0
PUNT	NO	YDS	AVG	BK
Parsons	80	3232	40.4	7
SCORE	TD	EP/M	FG/M	PTS
Payton	16	0/0	0/0	96
Thomas	0	27/30	14/27	69

Heading up the cast in the deep zones is strong safety Gary Fencik, a pugnacious defender who intercepted four passes and led the team in tackles (133 total, 93 solos) last season. On the prowl at free safety is Doug Plank, who had four pass thefts in '77. The Fencik-Plank tandem gives the Bears the finest pair of safeties in the NFC outside of the Dallas Cowboys' All-Pro duo of Cliff Harris and Charlie Waters.

Manning one cornerback position is Allan Ellis, who came up with a team-high six interceptions last season, while patrolling the other corner is diminutive Virgil Livers, who hits with a heck of a wallop for a guy only 5-9 and 175 pounds. The top honcho in reserve at cornerback is Mike Spivey, a promising young ballhawk who got "burned" a few times as a rookie in '77 but should develop into a standout with some experience. Others providing depth in the secondary are Craig Clemons, Terry Schmidt and Len Waltherich, although Clemons—formerly a regular—is unhappy with his back-up role and has let it be known he would like to be traded to another team.

The place kicking duties are the responsibility of Bob Thomas, and who could forget his dramatic field goal conversion in last year's final regular season game, which gave the Bears a 12-9 overtime victory over the NY Giants and clinched a playoff berth for Chicago? But unfortunately, Thomas isn't always that reliable as a kicker, and he may find himself out in the cold if he doesn't quit missing so many chip shots.

*The Bears are leaving no stone unturned in their efforts to beef up the defensive unit, signing linemen Walt Patulski (ex-St. Louis Cardinal) and Tommy Hart (ex-San Francisco 49er)*

#### 1977 Regular Season Statistics

	BEARS	OPP
FIRST DOWNS	247	241
NET RUSH	2811	2156
Avg Per Game	200.8	154.1
NET PASS	1844	2127
Att/Comp	305/161	377/182
Had Int	18	18
Avg Per Game	131.7	151.9
PUNTS/AVG	82/39.4	93/39.1
Punts Return/Yds	47/471	42/216
Avg Per Return	10.0	5.1
KICKOFF-RET/YDS	57/1275	52/1010
Avg Per Return	22.3	19.4
FUMBLES/LOST	36/17	27/13
FIELD GOALS	14/27	21/29
PATS	27/30	26/26
TOTAL POINTS	255	253

when they played out their options and became free agents. Both Patulski and Hart should help out immediately in the defensive line, where the Bears did suffer one setback when their former All-Pro tackle Wally Chambers, a disgruntled free agent, jumped ship to sign on with the Tampa Bay Bucs.

**GAMEPLAN CONCLUSION:** Well, the Bears finally awoke from their long hibernation last season and came within a whisker of knocking the haughty Minnesota Vikings off the NFC Central throne. There's not let-up in sight this year, either, as the Windy City gridders prepare for their first go-round under new head coach Neill Armstrong. Offensively, it's Payton left... Payton right... Payton up the middle for the Bears. So long as "Sweetness" keeps going and doesn't suffer any (ugh!) injuries, the attack will be prolific. Mix in a good young passer like Avellini, top-notch receivers such as Scott and Latta, plus a solid front wall, and it adds up to a potentially explosive offense that should get better with each passing season. But, and we hate to keep harping on this same old subject, should the heart-and-soul, the magnum force on offense—Payton—sustain any injury more serious than a hang-nail, the attack is liable to tail off quite drastically. Over on the defensive side, the Bears are in excellent shape in the secondary, led by safeties Fencik and Plank, both of whom are equally adept at stopping the pass or the run. But the remaining areas on defense—the front wall and linebacking spots—just don't look solid enough to give the Bears the kind of stop troops that can be labeled championship-caliber. If, and this is a big IF, Wally Chambers returns and plays up to his previous standards, the first-line-of-defense would be a lot tougher to penetrate. But due to the serious nature of the knee injury, no one can say for certain Chambers will be able to make a complete recovery. Rookie skipper Armstrong, a man accustomed to winning after his long stint with the Minnesota Vikings, should be pleased with his first edition of Bears. Barring the unexpected, Chicago will probably notch anywhere from nine to eleven victories in '78 under the new 16-game regular season alignment. And while it's doubtful the Bears can unseat the Vikings as the NFC Central rulers, they should run a close second and make a strong bid to return to the playoffs via the wild card route again.

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# Detroit Lions

(6-8-0)

Down through the years, there've been a number of dance crazes that have swept America. Like that old standard, the Fox Trot, or the wild Lindy Hop so popular in the '40s, and now the current disco rage that is known as the Hustle. By courtesy of William Clay Ford, automobile magnate and owner of the Lions football team, there's another dance on the scene—it's called the Motor City Two-Step.

Here's how it goes. First, you put your right foot over here, then you fire one head coach and all his peers, then you go and sign another in his place, and you shake it round and shake it round, and hope for the best!

Seriously, though, that's a rather innane take-off on the situation in Detroit, where the Lions have gone through five different head coaches in the past decade. Latest to bite the dust was Tommy Hudspeth, axed at the end of last season's disappointing 6-8 showing and replaced by Monte Clark, formerly head man with the San Francisco 49ers.

Clark is a dedicated skipper who did a fine job in his short stay with the 49ers, but was let go when he and the team's newly hired General Manager, Joe Thomas, ran afoul of each other. In his lone year ('76) at the 49ers helm, Clark coached the team to an 8-6 mark, and he was looking forward to even bigger and better things for the 49ers until GM Thomas arrived and the *bleep* hit the fan.

Certain to be Clark's first major undertaking upon arrival in the Motor City will be to put some new life in the team's offense, which managed a scant 121.9 yards-per-game rushing and an even more embarrassing 108.4 yards-an-outing through the passing lanes last season. When you recall his success at assembling a strong, balanced attack in his brief tour in San Francisco, Clark seems just the guy to get the job done.

**OFFENSE:** The probable starter at quarterback for the Lions is Greg Landry, a seasoned 11-year pro who fell into disfavor last year when Tommy Hudspeth was coach and wound up the campaign languishing on the bench. The biggest single reason rookie skipper Clark will undoubtedly go with Landry is, plain and simple, he's the best the Lions have at the signal calling spot. That, and the fact Landry has demonstrated in the past that he can be a standout performer when he's playing at his best.

For the entire '77 campaign, Landry rifled completions on 135 of 240 passes (56.3%), which accounted for 1,359 yards and six touchdowns. Early in his pro career, a series of knee injuries, partially responsible for Landry's being sacked 35 times a year ago, has rendered him virtually immobile. The team's offensive line and their lack of reliable pass blocking is also to blame for Landry's 35 sacks.

The regular quarterback at the end of last season was Gary Danielson, who completed only 42 of 100 aeriels and gave up five interceptions in his brief fling as

## 1978 Schedule

Sep 3	GREEN BAY
Sep 9	at Tampa Bay
Sep 17	CHICAGO
Sep 24	at Seattle
Oct 1	at Green Bay
Oct 8	WASHINGTON
Oct 15	at Atlanta
Oct 22	SAN DIEGO
Oct 29	at Chicago
Nov 5	at Minnesota
Nov 12	TAMPA BAY
Nov 19	at Oakland
Nov 23	DENVER
Dec 3	at St. Louis
Dec 9	MINNESOTA
Dec 17	SAN FRANCISCO

signal caller. Danielson, entering his third NFL campaign, is a former WFLer with a strong throwing arm, but he still needs a lot of polish. Although he's seen only limited action since joining the Lions in '74 via a trade with San Francisco, seven-year pro Joe Reed is the No. 3 quarter-

back. As a group, the Lions have a fairly talented pass receiving corps, but they suffer because of the team's lack of a reliable quarterback to get the ball to them. At one wide receiver is fleet-footed Ray Jarvis, third on the team in '77 with 28 catches for 353 yards and one TD. Jarvis is blessed with the blazing speed needed to be a potent deep threat, but again, the problem is finding a passer who can take advantage of his talents.

J. D. Hill, a steady eight-year pro, is set at the other wide receiver, having raced for 247 yards and one score with 24 receptions last season. Supplying depth at the wide spots is speedburner Luther Blue, who had eight catches and hauled in one touchdown aerial in '77.

Lions	1977 Results	Opp
20	at Chicago	30
23	New Orleans	19
17	Philadelphia	13
7	at Minnesota	14
10	Green Bay	6
7	at San Francisco	28
0	at Dallas	37
20	San Diego	0
6	at Atlanta	17
16	Tampa Bay	7
14	Chicago	31
9	at Green Bay	10
13	at Baltimore	10
21	Minnesota	30

Galloping out of the tight end spot is promising David Hill, who hauled in 32 passes a year ago, carting them for 465 yards and two TDs. Hill is a budding young star with the makings of a future All-Pro. Backing him up is the venerable Charlie Sanders, an 11-year pro and the leading receiver (336 catches) in Lion history. Sanders, a seven-time Pro Bowl selection, missed the second half of last season with a knee injury, but his return provides the team with excellent depth at tight end.

The big gun at running back is chunky Horace King (5-10, 210), who enjoyed the unique distinction of leading the team last year in both rushing yardage (155 carries for 521 yards) and pass catching (40 for 238 yards). King is a low-slung ball totter who doesn't give opponents much of a target, enabling him to rip through the middle even when enemy defenders seem to have him wrapped up.

Slated to start at the other running back spot is second-year pro Rick Kane, who rushed for 421 yards and four touch-

## Detroit Lions Rookie Roster

(Listed in order of selection)

NAME	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
Bradley, Luther	DB	6-2	198	Notre Dame
Baker, Al	DE	6-6	259	Colorado St
Fifer, William	T	6-5	260	W Texas St
Elias, Homer	G	6-3	245	Tennessee St
Tearry, Larry	C	6-3	230	Wake Forest
Fowler, Amos	G	6-3	245	Southern Miss
Gray, Dan	DE	6-6	225	Rutgers
Hicks, Dwight	DB	6-2	180	Michigan
Ardizzone, Tony	G	6-4	250	Northwestern
Thompson, Jesse	WR	6-0	180	California
Gibson, Bruce	RB	6-0	215	Pacific
Breech, Jim	K	5-7	165	California
Arrington, Fred	LB	6-3	193	Purdue
Murray, Richard	DT	6-2	245	Oklahoma
Patterson, Mark	DB	6-2	194	Washington St



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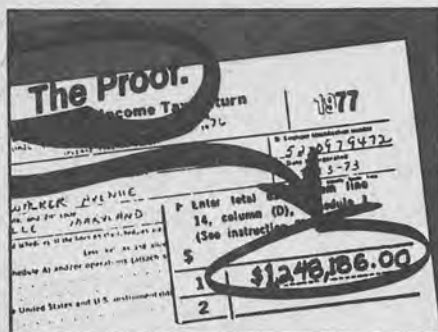
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To prove it, herewith is a reproduction of my IRS for 1977. Please note the gross income figure.



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Okay, so what does this have to do with football?

First of all, I am neither a racing person nor a football person. I am a MONEY Person. I'll handicap a game of tiddewinks if I think I have an edge. And I don't care which side wins as long as I win.

So, much as I love football, I don't lay down dime number one till I've got that edge. And that means spadework and meticulous preparation.

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"Say, Mike, the Las Vegas line give Oakland minus 7 over New England. Does that sound right?"

"Too many points," I say, "even on paper. The key is the 3-4 defense. It's going to give the Pats the edge. Don't forget, Houston almost beat the Raiders with the 3-4 a few weeks ago. Plus the Pats have the home advantage. The line is nuts. I look for the Pats to win outright." (Final score: New England 48, Oakland 17)"

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Some Key Picks:	What We Said:
9/17 Ark over Ark St	10/29 N.C. over Maryland 7
9/17 Indiana over LSU	10/30 Tam Bay over S Fran
9/18 Dallas over Minn	*11/5 Syracuse over Navy
9/25 Denver over Buff	*11/6 St. Louis over Minn
9/25 Cinn over Seattle	11/12 Clemson over N.D. 8
10/1 Tenn over Oreg St	11/12 Miss St. over Miss
10/2 Atl over Giants	11/13 St. Lou over Dallas
10/2 Pitt over Cleve	11/25 UCLA over USC
10/8 Ala over So Calif 1	11/25 Okla over Nebr
10/8 Ky over Miss St	11/27 Seattle over S.D.
10/9 Phil over Giants	*12/3 Fla St. over Fla
10/9 Houston over Pitt	*12/4 LA over Oakland
10/15 Texas over Ark 2	*12/11 Cinn over Pitt
10/15 No. Car over N.C. St 3	12/11 Tam Bay over N.O.
10/16 Chic over Minn 4	12/11 Seattle over K.C.
10/16 Den over Oak	12/11 Tam Bay over N.O.
10/16 Dallas over Wash 5	12/11 Seattle over K.C.
10/24 Atl over Chi 6	12/18 Minn over Detr 9
10/24 LA over Minn	
<b>NFL Playoffs:</b> 6 out of 8 - 75%!	<b>College Bowls:</b> 4 out of our 5 Best Bets - 80%!
*UPSET... PLUS another 6 upsets in my Best Bet and regular picks.	

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\*THIS WAS '76, OF COURSE!

horse: his breeding, his owner, trainer and jockey, his speed and class and prior consistency, the weather, the turf, etc.

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In fact, I don't want to. Human nature is funny... By now, 9 out of 10 readers have already turned the page. That's fine by me. Let's not kill the golden goose. Just give me a handful of smart bettors—intelligent individuals who still have the sense they were born with.

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Week	Stake	Bet g Unit	W/L	Won	Lost	Net	Half	Banked
1. ( 9/17)	\$ 80	\$ 20	4/0	\$ 80	\$ 0	\$ 80	\$ 40	\$ 40
2. ( 9/24)	\$ 120	\$ 40	3/0	\$ 120	\$ 0	\$ 120	\$ 60	\$ 100
3. (10/1)	\$ 180	\$ 36	4/1	\$ 144	\$ 40	\$ 104	\$ 52	\$ 152
4. (10/8)	\$ 232	\$ 58	3/1	\$ 174	\$ 64	\$ 110	\$ 56	\$ 206
5. (10/15)	\$ 288	\$ 96	3/0	\$ 288	\$ 0	\$ 288	\$ 144	\$ 350
6. (10/22)	\$ 432	\$ 72	5/1	\$ 360	\$ 79	\$ 281	\$ 140	\$ 491
7. (10/29)	\$ 572	\$ 143	3/1	\$ 429	\$ 157	\$ 272	\$ 136	\$ 627
8. (11/5)	\$ 708	\$ 177	3/1	\$ 531	\$ 195	\$ 336	\$ 168	\$ 795
9. (11/12)	\$ 876	\$ 219	1/3	\$ 219	\$ 723	\$ 504	—	\$ 795
10. (11/19)	\$ 372	\$ 124	3/0	\$ 372	\$ 0	\$ 372	\$ 186	\$ 981
11. (11/26)	\$ 560	\$ 140	3/1	\$ 420	\$ 154	\$ 266	\$ 133	\$ 1114
12. (12/3)	\$ 695	\$ 139	4/1	\$ 556	\$ 153	\$ 403	\$ 200	\$ 1373
13. (12/10)	\$ 895	\$ 179	4/1	\$ 716	\$ 197	\$ 519	\$ 260	\$ 1631
14. (12/17)	\$ 1156	\$ 289	3/1	\$ 867	\$ 318	\$ 549	\$ 275	\$ 1908
15. (12/24)	\$ 1428	\$ 357	4/0	\$ 1428	\$ 0	\$ 1428	—	—

That's close to 60 TIMES YOUR ORIGINAL STAKE... or a winning percentage of 5.955%!

Net winning last week \$1428 stake \$1428

IMAGINE IF YOU HAD STARTED AT \$100 A GAME! TOTAL \$4,764

Me—I pay no attention to any of that. (After all, there are guys out there who bet against the Raiders because they don't like black jerseys or who bet the Browns because Uncle Louie lives in Cleveland—c'mon!) I take the position I'm the smart money.

Do you understand what I'm saying? BECAUSE VEGAS MUST RESPOND TO THE DIRECTION OF BETTING ACTION. THEY CANNOT BE AS ACCURATE AS THE SMART INDEPENDENT HANDICAPPER.

And that's why Vegas is ripe for the taking. And here's how you and I are going to do it:

**The Pyramid!** That's right. Racing gives you those juicy \$20 and \$30 horses every so often. But football is an even money proposition: bet \$100 to win \$100. So how do we make *real* money?... The Pyramid is the answer! Sure, in racing, where you have an 87.5% chance of losing, pyramid-ing can kill you.

But in football—where you've got an even shot—IF YOU CAN BANK ON A REASON-ABLY CONSISTENT WINNING PERCENT-AGE, PYRAMIDING CAN MAKE YOU A FORTUNE... AND I CAN PROVE IT!

Take a look at the table above. It shows that if you have bet just \$20 on each of my 4 Hotline picks the first week of the season—that's \$80 in total—and had bet my Hotline thereafter according to my simple pyramiding procedure—YOU WOULD HAVE WOUND UP WITH \$4,764! And I can verify it.

(I explain all this in more detail in my book, which you'll get as a bonus. Read on...)

## Okay, So Are You Ready... Here's My Deal:

Like my friend said, some hotlines charge you \$500 or \$1,000 for a couple of picks a week and can't touch my 81%. I'm going to give you a whole lot more for a whole lot less because I want you as a steady customer who'll stay with me year in and year out. (You'll get your million—and it won't take that long!)

### Here is my offer:

If you're an experienced bettor (and you know I'm offering you the best deal in football):

- I will give you at least 6 selections a week for the entire 13 Week College season and the newly expanded 16 week NFL schedule. Each Wednesday I will mail you my NEWSLETTER containing my BEST BETS—selections that did 74.4% last season... Each Saturday and Sunday you will call me on my private number so I can give you my 81% accurate HOTLINE PICKS, selections where by waiting till the last minute for late breaking information WE CAN SCORE BIG.

Fee: \$100

If you're not absolutely certain (or you can't spring for the whole tab):

- I will give you the same service as outlined above, but for a two week trial period. I guarantee you at least 12 selections for that period—that's 12 chances to win back your stake and join up for the rest of the season! Fee: \$20

Dear Mike,

GAP-78

You're right! I dare not turn down your offer—it makes too much sense!

☐ Sign me up for the two week initial period. Send me your Newsletter with your "BEST BET" picks that did 74.7% last season. Send me your telephone HOTLINE number so I can get your 81% picks, too! I promise not to share your selections with other bettors, and you have my assurance that if I win, I'll come aboard as a full time subscriber. Fee \$20.

☐ I don't want to run the risk of missing a week or two of selections. Enroll me now for the whole deal—Newsletter and Hotline for the full season. Fee \$100.

And please rush me my copy of "POWER PYRAMIDING: HOW TO SCORE BIG IN FOOTBALL."

☐ Enclosed is my check ☐ Bill my credit card

☐ Visa/BankAmericard

☐ American Express

☐ Master Charge

Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

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downs on 124 sorties last season, and is a standout member of the special teams. Kane was one of only two Lions (Dexter Bussey the other) able to chalk up over 100 yards rushing in a single game in '77.

Former rushing leader Bussey, who led the club in that department in 1975 and '76, is the top reserve at running back, having barreled for 338 yards on 85 attempts last season. If Bussey can bounce back from a knee injury that forced him to miss six games in '77, he's a candidate to re-claim a starting spot in the backfield.

The other veteran ball toters on the scene include veteran Marv Hubbard, a former great with the Oakland Raiders, Leonard Thompson and Eddie Payton. Payton, the older brother of Chicago Bears All-Pro Walter, is particularly adept at returning kicks, having led the Lions last season in both punt returns (27 for a 10.1 yard average and one 87-yard scoring jaunt) and kickoff runbacks (18 for a 25.4 yard average and a 98-yard TD scamper). Another in the picture is bullish Lawrence Gaines, a punishing runner who blasted for 659 yards in '76 but missed all of last year with a knee injury.

When you get right down to the bottom line, the biggest handicap facing first-year coach Clark in his efforts to bolster the team's attack is the offensive line, which just hasn't produced the way it seems capable of. About the most solid citizen up front is 15-year veteran Jon Morris at center, a steady performer voted the team's MVP last year.

Flanking him at the guards are former No. 1 draftee ('75) Lynn Boden and Russ Bolinger. This duo has a great deal of raw potential and is fairly competent at pulling out on sweeps, but both will have to show improvement on their straight-ahead blocking and their pass protection.

Long-time stalwart Jim Yarbrough, a 10-year pro, is stationed at one tackle. Outside of center Morris, he's the most consistent blocker in the front wall. Opposite him is man-mountain Craig Hertwig (6-8, 285). He'll have to fend off the challenge of Rockne Freitas, a former regular who missed the '77 season with an injury. Adding some badly needed depth in the trench is Mark Markovich, also returning from the injured list.

**DEFENSE:** Neither rain, sleet, snow, injuries nor long periods of time on the playing field seem to deter the Lions defensive unit, which turned in its usual solid performance a year ago. And while this unit doesn't have any big name stars who wind up being named All-Pro, it's a steady gang that plays the brand of mistake-free game that is the hallmark of a solid pro defense.

In the front wall, one flank is manned by 9-year veteran Jim Mitchell, a powerful 250-pounder who played a defensive tackle position early in his career. Firing in from the opposite end is Ken Sanders, an agile flankman and the best pass rusher on the team. Backstopping them are Ernest Price, a former No. 1 draft pick ('73) who hasn't developed as the Lions had hoped, and third-year pro John Woodcock.

Smashing enemy ball carriers from one tackle position is Doug English, while his running mate on the other side is seven-year pro Herb Orvis. English and Orvis

1977 LEADERS					
PASS	A/C	INT	YDS	TD	
Landry	240/135	7	1359	6	
Danielson	100/42	5	445	1	
REC	NO	YDS	AVG	TD	
King	40	238	6.0	0	
Hill, D.	32	465	14.5	2	
INT	NO	YDS	AVG	TD	
Hunter	6	104	17.3	0	
Barney	3	27	9.0	0	
RUSH	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD	
King	155	521	3.4	1	
Kane	124	421	3.4	4	
PUNT	NO	YDS	AVG	BK	
Summers	93	3420	36.8	5	
SCORE	TD	EP/M	FG/M	PTS	
Mike-Myr	0	19/23	8/19	43	
Bussey	5	0/0	0/0	30	

are both solid defenders against the run, but they will have to improve on their pass-rushing techniques. They are

1977 Regular Season Statistics		
	LIONS	OPP
FIRST DOWNS	218	206
NET RUSH	1706	1905
Avg Per Game	121.9	136.1
NET PASS	1518	1867
Att/Comp	384/191	302/161
Had Int	16	19
Avg Per Game	108.4	133.4
PUNTS/AVG	101/36.2	86/40.0
Punts Return/Yds	42/345	62/535
Avg Per Return	8.2	8.6
KICKOFF-RET/YDS	58/1242	33/741
Avg Per Return	21.4	22.5
FUMBLES/LOST	26/14	32/16
FIELD GOALS	8/19	12/24
PATS	19/23	28/31
TOTAL POINTS	183	252

backed-up by Larry Hand, a former regular and a veteran of 13 pro seasons.

Outstanding linebackers have long

#### Detroit Lions 1978 Veteran Roster

										GAMES
NO	NAME	POS	HT	WT	AGE	YR	COLLEGE			IN '77
60	Anderson, Gary	G	6-3	250	23	2	Stanford			13
20	Barney, Lem	DB	6-0	190	33	12	Jackson St			12
89	Blue, Luther	WR	5-11	190	23	2	Iowa State			14
62	Boden, Lynn	G	6-5	270	25	4	So Dakota St			13
73	Bolinger, Russ	G/T	6-5	255	24	3	Long Beach St			14
43	Bolton, Andy	RB	6-1	205	24	3	Fisk			14
24	Bussey, Dexter	RB	6-1	210	26	5	Texas Arlington			8
31	Capriola, Glenn	RB	5-11	215	24	1	Boston College			0
53	Crosby, Ron	LB	6-3	225	23	1	Penn State			0
16	Danielson, Gary	QB	6-2	195	27	3	Purdue			12
58	Daykin, Tony	LB	6-1	215	23	2	Georgia Tech			14
78	English, Doug	DT	6-5	255	25	4	Texas			14
76	Freitas, Rockne	T	6-6	275	33	11	Oregon St			3
38	Gaines, Lawrence	RB	6-1	240	25	2	Wyoming			0
74	Hand, Larry	DT	6-4	245	38	14	Appalachian St			14
71	Hertwig, Craig	T	6-8	270	26	4	Georgia			14
81	Hill, David	TE	6-2	220	24	3	Texas A&I			14
86	Hill, J.D.	WR	6-1	185	30	8	Arizona State			11
44	Hubbard, Marv	RB	6-1	235	32	9	Colgate			13
28	Hunter, James	DB	6-3	195	24	3	Grambling			14
45	Jarvis, Ray	WR	6-1	190	29	8	Norfolk State			14
26	Jauron, Dick	DB	6-0	190	28	6	Yale			14
23	Johnson, Levi	DB	6-3	200	28	6	Texas A&I			3
32	Kane, Rick	RB	5-11	200	24	2	San Jose St			14
25	King, Horace	RB	5-10	210	25	4	Georgia			14
11	Landry, Greg	QB	6-4	205	32	11	Massachusetts			11
87	Larson, Bill	TE	6-4	220	25	3	Colorado St			12
53	Laslavic, Jim	LB	6-2	240	27	6	Penn State			14
65	Long, Ken	G	6-3	265	25	2	Purdue			0
68	Markovich, Mark	G/C	6-5	255	26	5	Penn State			4
12	Mike-Mayer, Steve	K	6-0	180	31	4	Maryland			14
88	Mitchell, Jim	DE	6-3	250	30	9	Virginia St			8
64	Mitchell, Melvin	C/G	6-2	260	25	3	Tennessee St			8
63	Morris, Jon	C	6-4	250	26	15	Holy Cross			14
50	Naumoff, Paul	LB	6-1	215	33	12	Tennessee			13
55	O'Neill, Ed	LB	6-3	235	26	5	Penn State			14
80	Orvis, Herb	DT	6-5	255	32	7	Colorado			14
34	Payton, Eddie	RB	5-8	175	27	2	Jackson St			8
42	Pinkney, Reggie	DB	5-11	190	23	2	East Carolina			11
72	Price, Ernest	DE	6-4	245	28	6	Texas A&I			12
14	Reed, Joe	QB	6-1	195	30	7	Mississippi St			3
1	Ricardo, Benny	K	5-10	175	24	2	San Diego St			0
88	Sanders, Charlie	TE	6-4	230	32	11	Minnesota			10
82	Sanders, Ken	DE	6-5	245	28	7	Howard Payne			11
79	Simonson, Dave	T	6-6	265	26	5	Minnesota			7
10	Summers, Wilbur	P	6-4	220	24	3	Louisville			13
57	Ten Napel, Garth	LB	6-1	215	24	3	Texas A&M			14
39	Thompson, Leonard	RB/WR	5-10	190	26	4	Oklahoma St			14
59	Weaver, Charlie	LB	6-2	225	29	8	USC			14
40	West, Charlie	DB	6-1	190	32	11	Texas El Paso			13
21	Williams, Walt	DB	6-0	185	24	2	New Mexico State			14
77	Woodcock, John	DT/DE	6-3	240	24	3	Hawaii			14
75	Yarbrough, Jim	T	6-6	270	32	10	Florida			13

been a tradition in Detroit, and the present-day crew does nothing to tarnish that image. The pacesetter is strong side 'backer Charlie Weaver, a hard-hitting veteran who's led the team in total tackles the last two years. Weaver is a player with a knack for making the "big" play, one of the reasons he's been voted the team's defensive MVP the last two years.

Twelve-year bulwark Paul Naumoff is on duty at the other outside linebacking spot. Naumoff, a tough defender who makes up for the loss of some quickness with his tremendous experience, missed several games in '77 with injuries—the first time in his NFL career that he wasn't able to answer the bell for a Detroit game.

Backing up the middle of the line is wide-ranging Ed O'Neil, possibly the most versatile of the regular 'backers since he plays extremely well against both the pass and the run. The Lions also boast solid depth at linebacker, with Jim Laslavic, Garth Ten Napel and Tony Daykin on call. Another player expected to help is Ron Crosby, back in tow after spending the entire '77 campaign (his first in the NFL) sidelined with an injury.

Injuries created a giant headache for the Lions in the defensive secondary last season, especially the one which cost the services of cornerback regular Levi Johnson. Before he went down a year ago, Johnson was having a good season with two pass interceptions in the early going, and he's bound to be a key factor in the secondary now that he's back in action.

On patrol at the opposite corner is gifted third-year pro James Hunter, who led the team last season (for the second consecutive year) with six pass interceptions. The foremost reserve at cornerback is Walt Williams, a speedster (9.5 in the 100) and Detroit's top pick (second round) in last year's college draft.

Stationed at free safety is 12-year pro Lem Barney. He alternated between there and cornerback last season when Levi Johnson was hurt, yet still managed to come up with three pass thefts. The regular strong safety is Dick Jauron, who also notched three interceptions in '77. In reserve at the safety spots are Charlie West, a one-time regular, and second-year pro Reggie Pinkney.

Wilbur Summers, signed on as a free agent, wound up the team's regular punter last season, but his performance (93 kicks for a 36.8 yard average) will have to improve if he wants to hang onto that job. Another free agent signee, Steve Mike-Mayer handled placement duties, converting 19 of 23 PATs and 8 of 19 field goals. He's also in danger of getting the boot (pardon the pun) unless he turns in a better showing.

**GAMEPLAN CONCLUSION:** In the personable and hard-working Monte Clark, the Lions have acquired (finally!) a head coach with the necessary ingredients to get the utmost out of the team—something his predecessors were not always able to do. And that, in and of itself, should result in a much better showing by this year's Motor City gridders. Offensively, we've got to think Clark will stick with battle-tested pro Landry at quarterback, a guy who's shown in the past that he can get the job

done. Provided Landry gets better protection from the team's highly-rated, but often erratic, offensive line, the Lions should have a potent passing attack. The rushing attack has potential, as well, although the Lions could still use a break-away threat to take some of the pressure off power runners like King, Kane and (if he's healthy again) Bussey. The whole ball of wax on offense hinges on the front wall and its performance, and we've got to believe that Clark will be able to pound this unit into shape and get the team's attack into high gear. Over the defensive side of the ledger, the Lions are less of a question mark, although there doesn't seem to be enough quality depth (especially in the front wall) to withstand any major outbreak of injuries. The linebacking crew is one of the best, though often the most underrated in the NFC, and they serve as the heart-and-soul of a defense capable of playing tough against

the run but one which may have trouble stopping the pass. In the secondary, the return of cornerback Levi Johnson from the ranks of the walking wounded is certain to help, and so will the valuable experience picked up by Walt Williams. But you have to wonder about Detroit's secondary crew, with aging veterans like Barney, West and Jauron. If that trio suddenly gets too old to do the job all at once, which we're not saying is going to happen, the Lions will be in real trouble in the secondary. Taken in an overview, this is not a bad ball club, not by any stretch of the imagination. The Lions certainly seem better—at least on paper—than last year's mediocre 6-8 finish. And who knows, with the Vikings getting older and the Bears' defense somewhat suspect, it's not at all far-fetched to think that Detroit could, given all the bounces, walk away with the division championship.

## Green Bay Packers

### 1978 Schedule

Sep 3	at Detroit
Sep 10	NEW ORLEANS
Sep 17	OAKLAND
Sep 24	at San Diego
Oct 1	DETROIT
Oct 8	CHICAGO
Oct 15	SEATTLE
Oct 22	at Minnesota
Oct 29	TAMPA BAY
Nov 5	at Philadelphia
Nov 12	DALLAS
Nov 19	at Denver
Nov 26	MINNESOTA
Dec 3	at Tampa Bay
Dec 10	at Chicago
Dec 17	at Los Angeles

(4-10-0)

Although the won-lost record hung up by last year's Packers didn't draw any rave reviews from the critics, there's still a feeling in Green Bay that the home forces are finally out of the woods. The basis for that optimism is the number of outstanding young players on hand, a group Coach Bart Starr thinks can transform the Packers into a contending team with some additional experience.

"We're much better than a year ago, talent-wise," Coach Starr comments, "and that's where it has to start—with talent. They have to make the X's and O's come to life."

Very poetically phrased, skipper, as well as a pretty fair description of the current edition of Packers. The "youth movement" kicked off by Coach Starr four years back is starting to pay off in Green Bay with a stronger showing by the team each season, and who knows, someday in the future the Pack might really be back.

But for the here and now, which means the '78 NFL season, it's difficult to see how the Packers can make any great progress. Modest improvement, yes, that's very possible, although a major resurgence by the Packers seems too much

Packers	1977 Results	Opp
24	at New Orleans	20
10	Houston	16
7	at Minnesota	19
7	Cincinnati	17
6	at Detroit	10
13	at Tampa Bay	0
0	Chicago	26
10	at Kansas City	20
6	Los Angeles	24
9	at Washington	10
6	Minnesota	13
10	Detroit	9
10	at Chicago	21
16	San Francisco	14

to expect at this juncture.

Why, right in their own division (the NFC Central) Green Bay will have to move heaven and earth—not to mention Minnesota, Chicago and Detroit—just to improve on their fourth place finish of a year ago. And while the potential is there for Coach Starr's gridders to pull off a few upsets before this season is over, there're still too many problem areas for them to emerge as a contender in the race for the "Black-and-Blue" division title.

**OFFENSE:** Probably the single biggest "problem area" is the team's anemic offense, which managed only 229.4 yards-per-game and scored a measly 11 touchdowns (five rushing, six passing) last season. The number one requirement in getting the attack revved up is a reliable quarterback to serve as the catalyst.

The starting signal caller at the end of the '77 season was David Whitehurst, who completed 50 of 150 aeriels, but gave up seven pass interceptions against only one touchdown toss. Whitehurst is a promising second-year pro with surprising poise for his experience, and if he continues to improve on schedule, he could be the long-term solution at quarterback for the Packers.



Back to battle for the regular signal calling spot is veteran Lynn Dickey, the starter in '77 (113-220 pass completions; 1,346 yards; five TDs; 14 interceptions) until he went down late in the season with a knee injury. Dickey has endured similar problems in the past, which might make recovery a little more difficult, and the Packers will be hurting for reserve strength at quarterback if he doesn't mend completely.

The pass receiving corps is solid, but the problem is finding somebody who can get the ball to them on a consistent basis. Flagging down aerials from one wide receiving berth is Steve Odom, who latched onto 27 tosses last season, carting them for 441 yards and three touchdowns. One of Odoms' scoring receptions in '77 covered 95 yards, the longest passing TD in the NFC.

Stationed at the other wide receiver slot is Ollie Smith, who grabbed 22 passes for 357 yards a year ago, while supplying depth at the wide spots are Aundra Thompson and Keith Hartwig. Thompson is a speedy three-year pro who started his NFL career as a running back, and he could challenge for a starting assignment once he gains some experience.

The regular at the tight end spot is Rich McGeorge, but he was plagued by injuries in '77 when he managed only 17 pass receptions and wound up sharing duties with Bert Askson. This duo gives the Packers average strength at the tight end position, although it would help the aerial attack if one of them started producing as a consistent short-range pass receiver.

The most anemic aspect of last year's offense was the rushing attack, held to a paltry 104.5 yards-per-game. And it will take more than a large dose of Geritol to put some life in the team's listless ground game.

Leading the overland charge is Barty Smith, who rushed for 554 yards on 166 carries last season and led the club with 37 pass receptions for an additional 340 yards. Smith is a former No. 1 draft pick ('74) who can supply the Packers with some inside running thump, provided he can avoid the injuries that hampered him early in his pro career.

It's mere speculation which player will start at the other running back, since there's a wide-open battle shaping up for that berth. But off past performances, the logical choice is fleet-footed Willard Harrell, who notched 140 yards on the ground in '77 and averaged 9.0 yards (including one 75 yard scoring dash) on 28 punt returns.

Others in the running back derby are Eric Torkelson, Nate Simpson, Terrell Middleton and Jim Culbreath, not exactly what you'd call a breath taking group. Simpson and Middleton are both swift ball carriers who could add some quickness to the ground attack, but their lack of experience is a handicap.

Little-by-little, the Packers are putting together a reliable offensive line to supply the blocking muscle to make the attack work. But it is essential (no, make that "imperative") the regulars stay healthy since reserve strength in the line is thinner than the walls of a geisha house.

The premier blocker up front is tackle Mark Koncar, a 270-pound "hoss" who's one of the league's finest young interior

## Green Bay Packers Rookie Roster

(Listed in order of selection)

NAME	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
Lofton, James	WR	6-3	180	Stanford
Anderson, John	LB	6-3	208	Michigan
Hunt, Mike	LB	6-2	239	Minnesota
Hood, Estus	DB	6-0	172	Illinois St
Douglass, Mike	LB	6-0	210	San Diego St
Wilder, Willie	RB	6-1	196	Florida
Harris, Leotis	G	6-2	265	Arkansas
Plasketes, George	LB	6-2	202	Mississippi
Sproul, Dennis	QB	6-2	200	Arizona St
Myers, Keith	QB	6-3	190	Utah State
Key, Larry	RB	5-9	185	Florida St
Totten, Mark	C	6-6	282	Florida
Jones, Terry	DT	6-3	245	Alabama
Ramson, Eason	TE	6-2	214	Washington St

linemen. Sharing the tackle berth opposite Koncar are Dick Himes and Greg

Koch, the latter a good prospect who saw extensive duty as a rookie in '77.

## Green Bay Packers 1978 Veteran Roster

NO	NAME	POS	HT	WT	AGE	YR	COLLEGE	GAMES
								IN '77
88	Askson, Bert	TE	6-2	225	33	6	S'thern Texas	14
70	Barber, Bob	DE	6-3	240	27	3	Grambling	14
11	Beverly, David	P	6-2	180	28	5	Auburn	14
28	Buchanan, Willie	CB	6-0	190	28	7	San Diego St	14
77	Butler, Mike	DE	6-5	265	24	2	Kansas	14
53	Carr, Fred	LB	6-5	240	32	11	UTEP	14
50	Carter, Jim	LB	6-3	245	30	9	Minnesota	14
31	Culbreath, Jim	RB	6-0	210	26	2	Oklahoma	13
10	Dickey, Lynn	QB	6-4	220	29	8	Kansas State	9
12	Dowling, Brian	QB	6-2	200	31	4	Yale	5
57	Gofourth, Derrel	C	6-3	260	23	2	Oklahoma St	14
24	Gray, Johnnie	S	5-11	185	25	4	Cal. St.-Full.	14
51	Gueno, Jim	LB	6-2	220	24	3	Tulane	14
58	Hansen, Don	LB	6-2	228	34	12	Illinois	13
40	Harrell, Willard	RB	5-8	182	26	4	Pacific	13
82	Hartwig, Keith	WR	6-0	186	25	2	Arizona	7
62	Havig, Dennis	G	6-3	255	29	8	Colorado	9
72	Himes, Dick	T	6-4	260	32	11	Ohio State	14
71	Jackson, Melvin	G	6-1	267	24	4	USC	14
78	Johnson, Ezra	DE	6-4	240	23	2	Morris Brown	14
68	Koch, Greg	T	6-4	265	23	2	Arkansas	14
79	Koncar, Mark	T	6-5	268	25	3	Colorado	13
67	Kowalkowski, Bob	G	6-3	245	35	13	Virginia	9
60	Knutson, Steve	G	6-3	254	27	4	USC	14
46	Luke, Steve	S	6-2	205	25	4	Ohio State	14
13	Marcol, Chester	K	6-0	190	29	7	Hillsdale	14
34	Middleton, Terrell	RB	6-0	195	23	2	Memphis	14
37	Moresco, Tim	DB	5-10	176	24	2	Syracuse	14
54	McCarren, Larry	C	6-3	248	27	6	Illinois	14
29	McCoy, Mike C.	DB	5-11	183	25	3	Colorado	14
81	McGeorge, Rich	TE	6-4	230	30	9	Elon	14
61	McMath, Herb	DT	6-4	250	24	3	Morningside	9
84	Odom, Steve	WR	5-8	174	26	5	Utah	14
75	Pureifory, Dave	DT	6-1	255	29	7	E Michigan	12
23	Randolph, Terry	DB	6-0	184	23	2	Am. Int. U	14
74	Roller, Dave	DT	6-2	270	29	5	Kentucky	13
48	Simpson, Nate	RB	5-11	190	24	2	Tennessee St	12
33	Smith, Barty	RB	6-4	240	26	5	Richmond	14
56	Smith, Blane	LB	6-3	238	24	2	Purdue	1
89	Smith, Ollie	WR	6-3	200	29	5	Tennessee	12
43	Thompson, Aundra	WR	6-0	186	25	2	E Texas St	14
59	Toner, Tom	LB	6-3	235	28	6	Idaho State	14
26	Torkelson, Eric	RB	6-2	194	26	5	Connecticut	14
18	Vataha, Randy	WR	5-10	170	30	8	Stanford	6
21	Wagner, Steve	DB	6-2	208	24	3	Wisconsin	14
52	Weaver, Gary	LB	6-1	225	29	6	Fresno St	5
17	Whitehurst, David	QB	6-2	204	23	2	Furman	7
83	Williams, Clarence	DE	6-5	255	32	9	Prairie View	14

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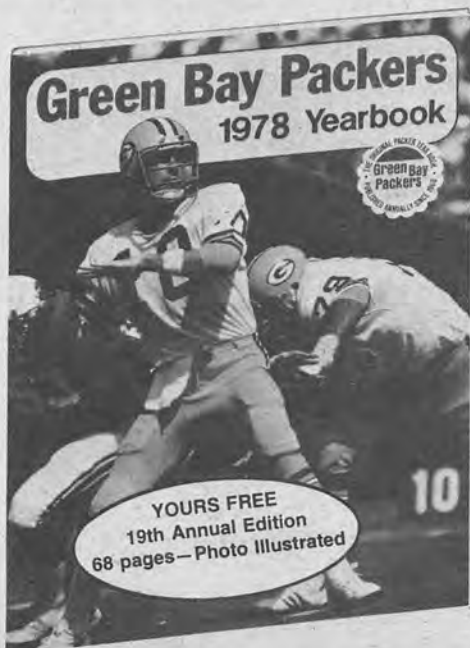
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Inside at the guard holes, the regulars are Dennis Havig and Mel Jackson, while manning the pivot spot is Larry McCarrren. As far as sheer quantity is concerned, the Packers are knee-deep in reserves up front, with Steve Knutson, Derrell Go-fourth and Bob Kowalkowski on call. Additional help is counted on from Rick Scribner, Gerald Skinner and Rell Tipton, all of whom missed last year with injuries. But large numbers do not a stable situation make, and it's questionable if the depth in the front wall will prove adequate over the long haul.

**DEFENSE:** The large share of credit for what success the Packers did enjoy last season has to go to the defensive unit, which turned in another rock-ribbed performance despite some injury problems. There's no let-up in sight for opponents this year, either!

The strongest area on defense is the front wall, where the flanks are protected by Mike Butler and Bob Barber, a fine young pair of defensive ends. Butler, the Pack's No. 1 pick in the '77 college draft, lived up to expectations with tough play against the rush and six quarterback sacks, while Barber accounted for 4½ sacks himself last season.

Plugging the tackle holes are Dave Roller and Dave Pureifory, reliable veterans who tied for the team lead in '77 with eight sacks apiece. Supplying depth at tackle are former regular Clarence Williams and Herb McMath, while the top reserve at end is second-year pro Ezra Johnson, who could challenge for starting duties with some extra experience.

#### 1977 LEADERS

PASS	A/C	INT	YDS	TD
Dickey	220/113	14	1346	5
Whitehurst	105/50	7	634	1
REC	NO	YDS	AVG	TD
Smith, B.	37	340	9.2	1
Odom	27	441	16.3	3
INT	NO	YDS	AVG	TD
Luke	4	9	2.3	0
McCoy	4	2	0.5	0
RUSH	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
Smith, B.	166	554	3.3	2
Torkelson	103	309	3.0	1
PUNT	NO	YDS	AVG	BK
Beverly	85	3391	39.9	9
SCORE	TD	EP/M	FG/M	PTS
Marcol	0	11/14	13/21	50
Odom	3	0/0	0/0	18
Smith, B.	3	0/0	0/0	18

Backing up the middle of the line is eight-year veteran Jim Carter, who must shake off the nagging injuries that have hounded him the last few years. Supplying depth in the middle is another battle-tested pro, Don Hansen, a former regular with the Atlanta Falcons entering his 12th NFL campaign.

Stationed at the weak side linebacking spot is Fred Carr, who had a disappointing '77 season but should bounce back this year, while holding forth opposite him is Tom Toner. Blane Smith and Jim Gueno are the top reserves, although certain to be a key factor is Gary Weaver, a former regular back in gear after missing the latter part of the '77 season with an injury.

#### 1977 Regular Season Statistics

	PACKERS	OPP
FIRST DOWNS	196	259
NET RUSH	1464	2317
Avg Per Game	104.5	165.5
NET PASS	1748	1725
Att/Comp	327/164	319/186
Had Int	21	13
Avg Per Game	124.9	123.2
PUNTS/AVG	86/39.4	73/37.4
Punts Return/YDS	38/321	53/311
Avg Per Return	8.4	5.9
KICKOFF-RET/YDS	51/947	39/785
Avg Per Return	18.6	20.1
FUMBLES/LOST	24/9	28/11
FIELD GOALS	13/21	11/20
PATS	11/14	22/25
TOTAL POINTS	134	219

Another area of the defense that's in tip-top condition is the secondary, where the Packers have a handful of ball-hawking veterans on duty. Enemy passers will find this gang just as inhospitable as last season, when they gave up only 123.2 aerial yards-per-game and 10 touchdown passes.

On the prowl at one cornerback position is seven-year pro Willie Buchanon, who notched two pass interceptions last season and ran one of those thefts back 27 yards for a touchdown. At the other corner is M. C. McCoy, a tenacious pass defender who tied for the team lead in '77 when he picked off four interceptions. However, should injury befall either of the regulars at cornerback, there could be



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trouble since the foremost reserve is Terry Randolph, a second-year pro with limited experience.

Rounding out the starting crew in the deep zones are safeties Steve Luke (strong) and Johnnie Gray (free). Gray is one of the finer secondary men in the league and, entering his fourth pro season, he's got the makings of a future All-Pro. Depth at the safety positions consists of Steve Wagner and Tim Moresco, giving the Packers solid reserve strength.

The kicking game is no better than average, with placement duties handled by Chester Marcol, who converted 11 of 14 extra points and 13 of 21 field goals last season. The punting is taken care of by David Beverly, who averaged 39.9 yards a kick in '77, but had nine of his punting attempts blocked.

**GAMEPLAN CONCLUSION:** The Packers have shown steady improvement under the direction of Coach Bart Starr the last three years even if their won-lost record hasn't been all that impressive. But Coach Starr and the football-mad residents of Green Bay are still paying the price for the fallow years that set in following the departure of Vince Lombardi

as head coach in 1967, a period that saw the Packers go from champions to "chump-ions" with alarming quickness. Now, slowly but surely, Starr and his coaching staff are putting the pieces back together and the Packers could be a real factor a few years down the road if they continue to improve at their present rate. However, for the present there're just too many holes in the make-up of this team for Green Bay to make tremendous strides forward in their quest for respectability. Offensively, there's a number of pressing needs but the biggest is undoubtedly at quarterback, where Whitehurst or injury-prone Dickey will have to produce. Our hunch is that Whitehurst will end up with the starting job, and while he's got loads of promise, his lack of real experience is certain to be a problem. Provided one of the quarterbacks can get the football aloft, the Packers have some quality receivers to haul it in, which should result in a stronger passing attack. Not the same can be said about the rushing game, which needs (in no special order of importance) a reliable "blaster" to power the inside attack as well as a swiftee who can run outside. That's a mighty tall order, coming all at one time! The offensive line is still a bit undermanned to supply out-

standing blocking, and this is another problem that must be resolved before the attack can hit full stride. Over on the defensive side, prospects are much brighter, especially in the front wall where the Packers have a wealth of fine defenders like Butler, Barber and Ezra Johnson, all young flankmen, and tackles Pureifory, Roller and Williams. The linebacking situation is not quite as stable, and could be downright critical if former standouts like Carr and Carter don't bounce back from sub-par performances in '77, and Gary Weaver fails to recover fully from injury. In the secondary, the Packers have a good combination of youngsters (M. C. McCoy, Gray) and veterans (Buchanon, Luke) on duty, and provided they stay healthy, so should the team's defense against the pass. Heading into their fourth year under Coach Starr, the Pack looks primed to improve in respect to their won-lost record, not really a mission impossible when you remember the previous three years produced marks of 4-10, 5-9 and 4-10. Call it from five to seven wins for the '78 Packers under the new 16-game scheduling set-up, which will enable them to hold on to fourth place in the NFC Central and finish ahead of the Tampa Bay Bucs.

# Tampa Bay Buccaneers

(2-12-0)

Who would have thought it possible? That the Tampa Bay Buccaneers—after losing 26 straight regular season games—could wrap up the '77 campaign with back-to-back victories over New Orleans (33-14) and St. Louis (17-7). Why, heck, some people figured Coach John McKay's gridders would be lucky to win a single game last season, let alone two in a row!

"Those wins showed our players the breaks don't always go to the other team," Coach McKay comments, "sometimes they go to the team that hangs in there and fights for them."

Which is perhaps the most noteworthy characteristic of the Bucs, a young team that kept hustling despite their near-record losing streak and finally got some rewards for their effort. In the staid world of pro football, where most teams go about their business with very little show of emotion, it's refreshing to watch a gung-ho team like the Bucs play.

Unfortunately, it will take a lot more than mere enthusiasm for Coach McKay's club to rise to even bigger things this season. Because while the Bucs have a handful of outstanding players (especially on defense), there're still too many trouble spots (especially on offense) for Tampa Bay to show major improvement on their won-lost mark in '78.

**OFFENSE:** There are differing points of view about which aspect of the Bucs' offense needs the most attention—the line, the rushing attack or the quarterbacking. But we'll cast our ballot for the signal calling spot, because let's face it, without a reliable field general your chances of fielding an explosive offense are slim and none.

1978 GamePlan PRO-FOOTBALL

## 1978 Schedule

Sep 2	NEW YORK GIANTS
Sep 9	DETROIT
Sep 17	at Minnesota
Sep 24	ATLANTA
Oct 1	MINNESOTA
Oct 8	at Kansas City
Oct 15	at New York Giants
Oct 22	CHICAGO
Oct 29	at Green Bay
Nov 5	at Los Angeles
Nov 12	at Detroit
Nov 19	BUFFALO
Nov 26	at Chicago
Dec 3	GREEN BAY
Dec 10	at San Francisco
Dec 17	NEW ORLEANS

The leading quarterback is six-year pro Gary Huff, but his playing time was curtailed by an injury in '77, when he completed 67 of 138 passes for 889 yards, three touchdowns and gave up 13 interceptions. Huff, a former regular with the Chicago Bears, has the skills to run the Bucs' attack if he can stay healthy, and he seems a natural for the starting job since he played his college ball at Florida State.

His chief competitor for the signal calling spot is ex-Philadelphia Eagle Mike Boryla, a strong-armed passer who missed all of last season (his first with the Bucs) due to injury. The other quarterbacking aspirants are Jeb Blount and Randy Hedberg, but they have to be considered "long shots" at best.

It makes you do a double-take when you glance at last year's offensive stat sheet for the Bucs and see they gained a miniscule 90.6 yards-per-game via the

Bucs	1977 Results	Opp
3	at Philadelphia	13
3	Minnesota	9
7	at Dallas	23
0	Washington	10
23	at Seattle	30
0	Green Bay	13
10	at San Francisco	20
0	at Los Angeles	31
0	N.Y. Giants	10
7	at Detroit	16
0	Atlanta	17
0	Chicago	10
33	at New Orleans	14
17	St. Louis	7

passing lanes. Goodness, your local Pop Warner team probably has more success at throwing the football than that!

Actually, the pass receiving corps isn't a bad one, the problem is finding a quarterback who can get the ball to them upon occasion. The best of the pass grabbers is wide receiver Morris Owens, who caught only 34 passes in '77, but averaged a spiffy 19.3 yards a catch. And like we said above, if a passer of real substance emerges, Owens could see enough action coming his way to be one of the most dangerous long-distance threats in the NFC.

Sharing duties at the other wide receiver are Issac Hagins and J.K. McKay, who teamed up for 17 catches last season. But they'll have to turn in better performances so opponents won't be able to double-team running mate Owens. Also available for duty at a wide spot is second-year pro Larry Mucker.



The Bucs had nothing but problems at tight end last season after regular Bob Moore went out with an injury, leaving only Dana Nafziger and Jack Novak, who combined for 11 pass receptions. Moore should be able to re-claim the starting job this year, but the same old problems will crop up again if he can't play back to his pre-injury form.

The rushing attack wasn't much more successful than its passing counterpart last season, as the Bucs managed just 101.7 yards-per-game on the ground. And that performance was especially disheartening to Coach McKay since he felt he had greatly strengthened the rushing game when he signed on a couple of his former Southern Cal ball toters, Ricky Bell and Anthony Davis.

The highly regarded Bell, a deceptively fast 220-pounder, rambled for 436 yards on 148 carries as a rookie in '77, prompting some critics to label him the "flop" of the year. But if the critics would jog their feeble memories and think back a bit, it even took the wondrous O.J. Simpson a few years before he hit the 1,000-yard rushing plateau as a pro. Bell has the potential to reach that lofty pinnacle himself once he's more experienced and the team's offensive line stops blocking like a piece of swiss cheese.

Vying for starting duties at the other running back are "A. D." Davis (mentioned earlier), Ed Williams, Louis Carter and George Ragsdale. Not exactly a dazzling line-up, don't you agree? The most promising of the quartet is the speedy Davis, but he'll have to bounce back after a miserable '77 season, during which he rushed for only 297 yards, fumbled the pigskin like there was a coat of vaseline on it, and wound up the whole rotten season on the injured reserve list with a banged-up knee. Boy, talk about bad luck coming in bunches!

Speaking of things that have the word "bad" associated with them, let's introduce the Bucs' offensive line, part-and-parcel to the team's pathetic attack. Hey, we don't like to put the "knock" on anybody, but the front wall just hasn't supplied the necessary blocking in the past, the main reason Tampa Bay's offense has been so unproductive. There will probably be a wholesale personnel turnover in the line if things don't improve very soon.

The pivot up front is Steve Wilson, a three-year pro who switched from guard to center last year, turned in a solid performance, and should get better with experience. Backstopping him is Danny Ryczek, a former regular with the Bucs who still handles the snapping on kicking attempts.

Stationed at the guard holes are Dan Medlin and Jeff Winans, with Randy Johnson in reserve, a young trio capable of improving as they pick up additional seasoning. Dave Reavis, probably the most consistent interior lineman, occupies one tackle spot, but the starting job on the other side is up-for-grabs. The best of an unlikely group bidding for that berth are Darryl Carlton, who started last season and was a big disappointment, Blanchard Carter and Calvin Harper, the latter back after spending the '77 campaign on the sidelines with an injury. So now do you see why we say this is an "un-

## Tampa Bay Buccaneers Rookie Roster

(Listed in order of selection)

NAME	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
Williams, Douglas	QB	6-3	214	Grambling
Davis, Johnny	RB	6-1	224	Alabama
Moritz, Brett	G	6-5	254	Nebraska
Marshall, Elijah	WR	6-1	177	N Carolina St
McGriff, John	LB	6-2	242	Miami
Taylor, Willie	WR	6-1	180	Pittsburgh
Brown, Aaron	LB	6-2	224	Ohio St
McLee, Kevin	RB	6-0	188	Georgia

likely" group?

**DEFENSE:** While Tampa Bay's offensive unit is (putting it kindly) suspect in many areas, the defense is the proverbial other side of the coin, with talent abounding at almost every position. Last

season, the Bucs held seven opponents to 14 points or less in a game, amazing when you recall the long amount of time they spent on the field because of the team's erratic offense. And what's even more amazing is that the Tampa Bay defenders

## Tampa Bay Buccaneers 1978 Veteran Roster

NO	NAME	POS	HT	WT	AGE	YR	COLLEGE	GAMES IN '77
42	Bell, Ricky	RB	6-2	220	23	2	S'thern Cal	11
17	Blount, Jeb	QB	6-3	200	24	2	Tulsa	5
53	Bonness, Rik	LB	6-3	220	24	3	Nebraska	13
10	Boryla, Mike	QB	6-3	200	27	4	Stanford	0
34	Brown, Cedric	DB	6-1	190	24	2	Kent State	14
70	Carlton, Darryl	T	6-6	270	25	4	Tampa	14
66	Carter, Blanchard	T	6-4	250	23	2	UNLV	13
32	Carter, Louis	RB	5-11	209	25	4	Maryland	14
33	Cotney, Mark	DB	6-0	205	27	4	Cameron St	14
28	Davis, Anthony	RB	5-10	190	26	2	S'thern Cal	11
35	DuBose, Jimmy	RB	5-11	215	24	3	Florida	13
4	Green, Dave	P	6-0	205	29	6	Ohio	14
81	Hagins, Isaac	WR	5-9	180	24	2	Southern	13
73	Hannah, Charles	DE-C	6-5	250	23	2	Alabama	9
52	Harris, Paul	LB	6-3	215	24	2	Alabama	14
14	Hedberg, Randy	QB	6-3	200	24	2	Minot State	7
19	Huff, Gary	QB	6-1	195	27	6	Florida St	8
56	Johnson, Cecil	LB	6-2	220	23	2	Pittsburgh	13
72	Johnson, Greg	DE	6-4	240	25	2	Florida St	5
65	Johnson, Randy	G	6-2	225	25	2	Georgia	12
25	Jordan, Curtis	DB	6-2	185	25	3	Texas Tech	12
77	Kollar, Bill	DT	6-4	256	26	5	Montana St	14
9	Leavitt, Allan	K	5-11	176	23	2	Georgia	8
59	Lemon, Mike	LB	6-2	220	27	4	Kansas	14
57	Lewis, David	LB	6-4	230	24	2	S'thern Cal	14
89	McKay, John	WR	5-11	185	25	3	S'thern Cal	14
68	Medlin, Dan	G	6-4	255	29	5	N Carolina St	14
88	Moore, Bob	TE	6-3	225	29	8	Stanford	3
87	Mucker, Larry	WR	5-11	190	24	2	Arizona State	14
83	Nafziger, Dana	LB	6-1	220	25	2	Cal Poly SLO	14
80	Novak, Jack	TE	6-5	240	25	4	Wisconsin	14
6	O'Donoghue, Neil	P	6-6	220	25	2	St. Bernard Coll	0
85	Owens, Morris	WR	6-0	190	25	4	Arizona St	14
76	Pear, Dave	DT	6-2	250	25	4	Washington St	14
23	Ragsdale, George	DB	5-11	185	25	2	N Carolina A&T	9
75	Reavis, Dave	T-G	6-5	250	28	4	Arkansas	14
46	Reece, Danny	DB	5-11	190	23	3	S'thern Cal	14
64	Robinson, Glenn	DE	6-6	245	27	4	Oklahoma St	14
78	Rudolph, Council	DE	6-4	255	28	7	Kentucky St	14
51	Ryczek, Dan	C	6-3	250	29	6	Virginia	14
61	Selmon, Dewey	LB	6-1	250	25	3	Oklahoma	14
63	Selmon, Lee Roy	DE	6-3	260	24	3	Oklahoma	14
91	Smith, Tody	DE	6-5	250	30	7	S'thern Cal	0
20	Tinker, Gerald	DB	5-9	171	27	2	Kent State	0
82	Waddell, Charles	TE	6-5	230	25	2	North Carolina	4
40	Washington, Mike	DB	6-3	190	25	3	Alabama	14
45	White, Jeris	DB	5-11	180	26	5	Hawaii	14
43	Williams, Ed	RB	6-1	245	28	5	Langston	14
79	Wilson, Steve	G	6-3	265	24	3	Georgia	14
62	Winans, Jeff	T-G	6-5	265	27	5	S'thern Cal	11
54	Wood, Richard	LB	6-2	215	25	4	S'thern Cal	14

have only been playing together two years, less than half the amount of time it normally takes to develop defensive cohesion in the NFL.

The Bucs have used a 3-4 alignment on defense almost exclusively since they entered the league in '76, and their starting nose tackle during most of that period has been Dave Pear, a powerful 250-pounder who just plain beats up on enemy centers. Supplying depth in the middle is Bill Kollar, an ex-Cincinnati Bengal acquired in a trade last year and still new to the position.

Thundering in from one line flank is Lee Roy Selmon, a budding All-Pro who paced the Bucs with 13 quarterback sacks in '77. Selmon came back last season to turn in a great all-around performance after missing over half of his rookie year ('76) with an injury. Protecting the opposite flank is steady veteran Council Rudolph, second in sacks last season with 6½, while the top reserves at end are Glen Robinson and Greg Johnson.

Deeper than the near-by Gulf of Mexico, that's how the linebacking corps stacks up, with excellent starting personnel and solid reserve strength. And as it is with so many outstanding defensive units in the NFL, the heart-and-soul of Tampa Bay's is their stellar group of 'backers.

Lowering the boom on enemy runners from the inside linebacking positions are Dewey Selmon, older brother of flankman Lee Roy, and big play specialist Richard Wood, who intercepted four passes last season and ran one back for a touchdown. Mike Lemon and Rik Bonness provide depth at the two inside spots.

Holding forth at outside linebacker are David Lewis and Paul Harris, who claimed starting jobs as rookies in '77 and play with a lot of poise for young defenders. Another second-year pro, Cecil Johnson, would be first to get the call on the outside if either of the regulars needs a breather.

In the secondary, the Bucs are in good shape at the corners, where Mike Washington and Jeris White (who combined for nine interceptions in '77) are on duty. The reserves at cornerback are Danny Reece and Curtis Jordan, both capable of helping out at safety too, and second-year pro Walter Packer.

Manning the strong safety spot Mark Cotney, a former Houston Oiler and a starter for the Bucs since he was acquired in the veteran allocation draft when the team was founded two years ago. Wide-ranging Cedric Brown, developing into an excellent defender against the pass and the run, is set at the free safety spot.

In this age of specialization in pro sports, the Bucs have a unique kicker in Dave Green, who handles both the punting and placement attempts for the team. However, the main reason that situation came about was the failure of the other kicking prospects to pan out, and Tampa Bay will probably continue shopping around until their kicking game starts improving.

**GAMEPLAN CONCLUSION:** It was a long time coming, but how sweet it was for Tampa Bay's loyal fans when the Bucs went on their victory "rampage" at

#### 1977 LEADERS

PASS	A/C	INT	YDS	TD
Huff	138/67	13	889	3
Hedberg	132/25	10	244	0
REC	NO	YDS	AVG	TD
Owens	34	655	19.3	3
Hagins	15	196	13.1	0
INT	NO	YDS	AVG	TD
Wash'ton	5	71	14.2	1
Wood	4	86	21.5	1
RUSH	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
Bell	148	436	2.9	1
Davis	95	297	3.1	1
PUNT	NO	YDS	AVG	BK
Green	98	3948	40.3	6
SCORE	TD	EP/M	FG/M	PTS
Leavitt	0	5/5	5/10	20
Owens	3	0/0	0/0	18

#### 1977 Regular Season Statistics

	BUCS	OPP
FIRST DOWNS	168	241
NET RUSH	1424	2031
Avg Per Game	101.7	145.1
NET PASS	1269	1895
Att/Comp	131/321	190/337
Had Int	30	23
Avg Per Game	90.6	135.3
PUNTS/AVG	99/39.9	89/37.6
Punts Return/Yds	48/361	71/469
Avg Per Return	7.5	6.6
KICKOFF-RET/YDS	43/914	33/699
Avg Per Return	21.2	21.2
FUMBLES/LOST	30/16	34/18
FIELD GOALS	9/17	14/25
PATS	10/11	23/26
TOTAL POINTS	103	223

**Don't pay  
in July and pray  
in October.**

See Page 127

the end of last season. It also provided Coach McKay, who endured some truly nasty criticism when his team was losing, the opportunity to give his detractors his version of the victory sign—you know, with one finger protruding. Throughout his coaching career at both Southern Cal and with the Bucs, McKay has always been a class individual, and it grated us to see him put on the torture rack when the Bucs were doing what every expansion team does best of all—losing games. But all that started changing late last season, and it is with almost giddy optimism that Tampa Bay heads into this NFL campaign. Beginning with the best foot forward, there's the defensive unit, which is in great shape for the short time it's been together. With young bulwarks like the Selmons, Wood and Lewis, Washington and Brown, the Bucs can only get better on defense as they pick up more experience. When you stop to consider what Tampa Bay's stop troops have accomplished already, it's enough to label them one of the best defensive units in the

league. But the offense, as we've already stated, is quite another story. Remember the old Abbott and Costello comedy routine, the one about who's on first, what's on second, and I don't know's on third? Well, in a way, it's an apt description of the Bucs' offensive unit, which over the years has tried on more players than a woman tries on clothes in a dress shop. The present attack force is potentially the best since the team's inception, but that's not to say the offense is trouble free—not by a long shot. If, and these are all big ifs, offensive performers like Huff and Boryla, Bell and Davis, and the entire front wall suddenly hit their stride, the attack could pack a lethal wallop. The odds against all that happening this season are very high, but we do think the offense will perk up enough to keep the Bucs a lot more competitive in their games than they were a year ago. In their own division, the NFC Central, the Bucs could conceivably slip ahead of the Green Bay Packers into fourth place in the standings, since they seem capable of winning between 4 and 7 games under the new 16-game slate. But, then again, the Bucs—if they don't get some offensive punch—could go into a fatal tailspin in '78, which is what makes them such a hard team to forecast. Taking the middle road, we'll call it a modest improvement by this year's Bucs in the win column and a bid to climb higher in the NFC Central. But the best days, alas, for Tampa Bay fans are still well in the future.

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# NFC WEST



Atlanta's Haskell Stanback on the move against the Giants.

# Los Angeles Rams

(10-4-0)

In the immortal words of TV announcer Ed (the Tonight Show) McMahon—only with a slight twist—and now ladies and gentlemen, here's-s-s-s Georgie! George Allen, that is, back for an encore performance as head coach of the Rams following a seven-year stint with the Washington Redskins. And you'll have to excuse Allen if he seems a bit flustered at first in LA, because after his lengthy tour with the "Over-the-hill" gang, he just isn't used to seeing so much youthful talent assembled in one place at the same time.

The Rams boast more talent than any NFC team this side of the Dallas Cowboys, witnessed by the fact they've been to the championship playoffs the last five years while under the direction of previous skipper Chuck Knox. However, despite their success during that period, there were always two raps against the Rams: 1) they never won the NFC title; and 2) they were damned boring to watch.

New skipper Allen, an innovative coach if ever there was one, should add some badly needed color, especially to an offensive unit that disdained the forward pass last season like it was a form of the plague. But so far as their winning this year's NFC title is concerned, well, the defending champion Dallas Cowboys will have something to say about that.

**OFFENSE:** Calling signals for a potentially explosive attack is Pat Haden, who ranked second among NFC passers last season, completing 122 of 216 aeriels for 1,551 yards, 11 touchdowns and only six interceptions. Haden isn't one of those glamour boys with great size and a howitzer for a throwing arm, but he's a good short-to-medium range passer and a skilled field general young enough (25) to get even better with experience.

Reserve strength at quarterback was depleted by the retirement of Joe Namath, although the Rams do have a promising young back-up in Vince Ferragamo, a 60% passer last season in short relief roles. There's also speculation George Allen is trying to swing a deal for his old Washington signal caller, Billy Kilmer, and if he's successful that will be extra icing on the cake.

The main weapon in the pass receiving corps is All-NFC Harold Jackson, who sped for 666 yards on 48 catches last season and led the team by hauling in six scoring tosses. In his 11th pro season, Jackson has established himself as one of the premier deep threats in the business, but opponents may start ganging on him if his running mate on the other side, Ron Jessie, can't bounce back from an injury that sidelined him late in the '77 campaign.

Latest reports indicate Jessie is mended and ready to take back his starting job at wide receiver, and he better be if he wants to oust promising Billy Waddy, who filled in last season showing great potential with 23 catches for 355 yards. Other wide receivers available are Dwight Scales,

1978 GamePlan PRO-FOOTBALL

## 1978 Schedule

Sep 3	at Philadelphia
Sep 10	ATLANTA
Sep 17	DALLAS
Sep 24	at Houston
Oct 1	at New Orleans
Oct 8	SAN FRANCISCO
Oct 15	at Minnesota
Oct 22	NEW ORLEANS
Oct 30	at Atlanta
Nov 5	TAMPA BAY
Nov 12	PITTSBURGH
Nov 19	at San Francisco
Nov 26	at Cleveland
Dec 3	at New York Giants
Dec 11	CINCINNATI
Dec 17	GREEN BAY

who averaged 20.8 yards per reception in '77, and Freeman Johns, giving the Rams solid top to bottom strength at the wide spots.

The tight end position is just as strong, with Terry Nelson starting and Charles Young in reserve. Nelson finished second on the team last season with 31 pass receptions (for 401 yards, three TDs), but now that Young—a former All-Pro with the Philadelphia Eagles—is a little more acclimated, there could be a spirited battle for starting duties at tight end.

The top gun in the rushing attack is durable Lawrence McCutcheon, who ripped for 1,238 yards last season, the fourth 1,000-yard season in his pro career. McCutcheon enters this year as the leading ground gainer in LA history, and that's no small feat when you consider he had to beat out former star runners like Dick Bass, John Arnett and Tank Younger.

Set at the other running back is John Cappelletti, who barreled for 598 yards on 178 rushing attempts last season. In addition to his running prowess, Cappelletti's a tough blocker and sure-handed receiver, and when you stop to think about it, there really isn't much else you could ask for in a complete running back.

Heading up the reserve corps of ball

Rams	1977 Results	Opp
6	at Atlanta	17
20	Philadelphia	0
34	San Francisco	14
23	at Chicago	24
14	New Orleans	7
35	Minnesota	3
26	at New Orleans	27
31	Tampa Bay	0
24	at Green Bay	6
23	at San Francisco	10
9	at Cleveland	0
20	Oakland	14
23	Atlanta	7
14	at Washington	17

carriers is swiftee Wendell Tyler, who averaged 5.2 yards a pop (on 61 attempts) and took off on a 44-yard scoring dash last season. There're also reliable veterans Cullen Bryant, Rod Phillips and Jim Jodat.

Injuries really did a number on the offensive line in '77, claiming Dennis Harrah, Ed Fulton, Doug Fowler, Donnie Hickman and Jeff Williams. Phew, that's what you call an epidemic. Yet through it all, LA's front wall held together fairly well, which bodes extremely well for the future now that all the "walking wounded" are back in tow.

The wheelhorse up front is Pro Bowler Rich Saul, the best center in the NFC, while backing him up is Rick Nuzum. Filling the guard holes at the end of last season were long-time standout Tom Mack, 10 times selected to the Pro Bowl, and Greg Horton, although the latter will be relegated to a reserve role once again with Harrah back from the injured reserve list.

One tackle hole is the private domain of Doug France, a 270-pound roadblock who ranks with the finest pass blockers in the league. On duty at the other tackle is steady 11-year pro John Williams, while first in line among the reserves is Winston Hill, a former NY Jet. Depth in the front

## Los Angeles Rams Rookie Roster

(Listed in order of selection)

NAME	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
Peacock, Elvis	RB	6-1	201	Oklahoma
Johnson, Stan	DT	6-3	245	Tennessee St
Smith, Ron	WR	5-11	188	San Diego St
Corral, Frank	P	6-1	236	UCLA
White, Leon	C	6-3	271	Colorado
Manges, Mark	QB	6-3	215	Maryland
Doss, Reggie	DE	6-4	245	Hampton
Anderson, Andre	DE	6-7	264	New Mexico St
Peal, Charles	TE	6-5	253	Indiana
Hostetler, Ron	LB	6-1	210	Penn State
Coppens, Gus	T	6-6	264	UCLA



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### Preview of upcoming game

**We do the updating . . . You do the winning Every Week vs. the Spread.**

Camford 35, LSU 31

W The Broncos Western Division title in a rather men's when there was little the Broncos could do to get stature to a wild card game. The Broncos had a history of season" begins in a place that is certainly not a place of offense from the Broncos. The Broncos Jones is the quarterback that Ken Stabler who can beat you with his arms. Oakland's defense is hurting from the absence of Bill Villipiano and the Broncos look for to go on that throwing to his next man than usual. The Broncos only somehow, in the playoffs, to make the Broncos always seem something to a solution to their problem. Regardless of the Broncos Oakland might have you have to go with the team that plays the QB who is at his best when it counts the most.

Spread	1-0	1-0	Record	Record	2-1	Away
vs. Spread	3-0	0-0	Record as Favorite	Record as Underdog	1-2	1-2
	1-0	0-0-1	Favorites vs. Spread	Underdog vs. Spread	0-0	2-0
		0-0			1-2	0-2
					0-0	1-0
						0-2

LAST YEAR'S GAME		Nov. 6	
7	3	6	14
0	0	0	—
HOU		30	
19		—	
62-267		TEX	8
103		36-24	97
60			3
7-17-0		7-17-0	3
5-46-8		8-43-1	5
2-1		12-105	4
12-105		5-46-8	3

... had established a 32-game streak before four costly turnovers in the Houston to humiliate them in a reference contest. Sophomores sparked the Cougars to two

fourth quarter TD's, including a 26-yd. run of his own. Two of their TD's and two of Lennard's three FG's came as a result of Texas fumbles.

Series Record: Tied 1-1  
 Last Game: 1976;  
 Houston (NL) 30, Texas 0

The Longhorns celebrated their number one ranking with a romp over Texas Tech while Houston brought TCU back to reality after two consecutive wins with a trouncing ... Texas has been averaging just under 300 yds. rushing per game in their domination over opposing defenses. ... The Cougars have not been burned by the run by they haven't been stifling one defense either.

PREDICTION: Texas 21, Houston 9



wall will be greatly improved now that all those injured performers are back in good health.

**DEFENSE:** Great defenders like Merlin Olsen and David (Deacon) Jones seem to come and go, but the Rams' defensive unit keeps marching along, turning in one outstanding season after another. Last year, for instance, LA limited opponents to only 255.4 yards-per-game overall, and a scant 121.3 yards an outing via the ground route. Four members of the defensive unit (Jack Youngblood, Larry Brooks, Isiah Robertson and Monte Jackson) were selected as starters for the NFC in the last Pro Bowl.

Flankman Jack Youngblood, who led the team in sacks (8) last year, anchors one end of the defensive line, while roaring in opposite him is Fred Dryer, responsible for seven sacks himself in '77. Backing them up is Al Cowlings, an eight-year veteran and former starter for both the Buffalo Bills and Houston Oilers.

Plugging one tackle hole is Pro Bowler Larry Brooks, a mobile 260-pounder who led the down linemen in solo tackles with 55 last season. Sharing the other tackle berth are Mike Fanning and Cody Jones, but neither has come through on a consistent basis so far.

Stationed at the middle linebacking spot is Jack (Hacksaw) Reynolds, a ferocious hitter with eight years of NFL experience. Providing depth in the middle are Carl Ekern, a versatile defender who can also play at corner linebacker, and Kevin McClain, back in action after missing last season with an injury.

Strong side linebacking duties are taken care of by Jim Youngblood, who led the team in solo tackles (65) last season. However, as good as Youngblood is, he'll have to step lively to stave off the challenge of promising Bob Brudzinski, a second-year pro with starting potential now that he's made the conversion from a defensive end in college (at Ohio State) to an NFL linebacker.

On the prowl at the other outside linebacking spot is Isiah Robertson. He's the finishing touch on what has to be one of the finest starting 'backer corps in the league. Carl Ekern, mentioned earlier at MLB, and Bob Pifferini are the foremost reserves at outside linebacker.

"A+" is the grade merited by the LA defensive secondary, which held enemy passers to only a 48.6% completion average in '77 and was largely responsible for the team's total of 23 interceptions. The numero uno aerial thief is free safety Bill Simpson, who picked off six in '77 before going down with a knee injury in the final regular season game against Washington. Simpson's healthy again and back at his old haunt, with back-up support at free safety from Jackie Wallace.

Eight-year veteran Dave Elmendorf, who swiped two passes last season and led the team with 93 total tackles, patrols the strong safety area. Nolan Cromwell, who filled in at free safety in '77 when Simpson was injured, returns to his old role of No. 1 reserve at strong safety. He'll be a contender for starting duties with a bit more experience.

Manning one cornerback spot is two-time Pro Bowl selection Monte Jackson, who came up with five interceptions last

#### 1977 LEADERS

PASS	A/C	INT	YDS	TD
Haden	216/122	6	1551	11
Namath	107/50	5	606	3
REC	NO	YDS	AVG	TD
Jackson, H.	48	666	13.9	6
Nelson	31	401	12.9	3
INT	NO	YDS	AVG	TD
Simpson	6	157	26.2	0
Thomas	5	97	19.4	0
RUSH	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
McCufen	294	1238	4.2	7
Cappelletti	178	598	3.4	5
PUNT	NO	YDS	AVG	BK
Walker	73	2568	35.2	8
SCORE	TD	EP/M	FG/M	PTS
Septien	0	32/35	18/30	86
McCufen	9	0/0	0/0	54

#### 1977 Regular Season Statistics

	RAMS	OPP
FIRST DOWNS	270	203
NET RUSH	2575	1698
Avg Per Game	183.9	121.3
NET PASS	2016	1877
Att/Comp	339/182	370/180
Had Int	11	25
Avg Per Game	144.0	134.1
PUNTS/AVG	73/35.2	88/39.1
Punts Return/Yds	51/360	29/116
Avg Per Return	7.1	4.0
KICKOFF-RET/YDS	33/705	53/1156
Avg Per Return	21.4	21.8
FUMBLES/LOST	32/18	26/16
FIELD GOALS	18/30	7/18
PATS	32/36	17/18
TOTAL POINTS	302	146

season even though enemy passers threw away from his side of the field in deference to his skill as a defender. Pat Thomas, who added five thefts of his own in '77, operates at the other corner, and

the way this guy can rocket into the air to swat down passes or pick them off belies the fact he stands only five-feet-nine. The top reserve at cornerback is Rod Perry, a former regular back on duty after missing

#### Los Angeles Rams 1978 Veteran Roster

NO	NAME	POS	HT	WT	AGE	YR	COLLEGE	GAMES
								IN '77
90	Brooks, Larry	DT	6-3	255	28	7	Va. St.-Petersb'g	14
59	Brudzinski, Bob	LB	6-4	230	23	2	Ohio State	14
32	Bryant, Cullen	RB-KR	6-1	235	27	6	Colorado	14
22	Cappelletti, John	RB	6-1	217	26	5	Penn State	14
44	Collins, Sonny	RB	6-1	196	25	2	Kentucky	0
70	Cowlings, Al	DE-DT	6-5	245	31	8	S. California	14
21	Cromwell, Nolan	S	6-1	196	23	2	Kansas	14
89	Dryer, Fred	DE	6-6	240	32	10	San Diego State	14
55	Ekern, Carl	LB	6-3	220	24	3	San Jose State	14
42	Elmendorf, Dave	S	6-1	195	29	8	Texas A&M	14
79	Fanning, Mike	DT	6-6	260	25	4	Notre Dame	14
15	Ferragamo, Vince	QB	6-3	208	24	2	Nebraska	3
77	France, Doug	T	6-5	272	25	4	Ohio State	13
11	Haden, Pat	QB	5-11	182	25	3	S'thern California	12
60	Harrah, Dennis	G	6-5	257	25	4	Miami (Fla.)	8
73	Hill, Winston	T	6-4	272	37	16	Texas Southern	3
63	Horton, Greg	G	6-4	245	27	3	Colorado	14
29	Jackson, Harold	WR	5-10	175	32	11	Jackson State	14
28	Jackson, Monte	CB	5-11	189	25	4	San Diego State	14
81	Jessie, Ron	WR	6-0	185	30	8	Kansas	3
43	Jodat, Jim	RB	5-11	210	24	2	Carthage	14
88	Johns, Freeman	WR	6-1	175	25	2	S'thern Methodist	5
76	Jones, Cody	DT-DE	6-5	240	27	5	San Jose State	14
84	Joyce, Terry	P-TE	6-6	230	24	3	Missouri S. St.	4
65	Mack, Tom	G	6-3	250	35	13	Michigan	14
30	McCutcheon, L.	RB	6-1	205	28	6	Colorado State	14
50	McLain, Kevin	LB	6-2	227	24	3	Colorado State	8
82	Miller, Willie	WR	5-9	172	31	3	Colorado State	0
83	Nelson, Terry	TE	6-2	230	27	5	Arkansas AM&N	14
51	Nuzum, Rick	C	6-4	238	26	2	Kentucky	14
49	Perry, Rod	CB	5-9	170	25	4	Colorado	5
39	Phillips, Rod	RB	6-0	220	26	4	Jackson State	14
54	Pifferini, Bob	LB	6-2	226	28	6	UCLA	5
64	Reynolds, Jack	LB	6-1	232	31	9	Tennessee	9
58	Robertson, Isiah	LB	6-3	225	29	8	Southern U	14
61	Saul, Rich	C	6-3	250	30	9	Michigan State	14
87	Scales, Dwight	WR-KR	6-2	170	25	3	Grambling	12
33	Scribner, Rob	RB	6-0	200	27	5	UCLA	0
1	Septien, Rafael	K	5-9	171	25	2	S'west Louisiana	14
48	Simpson, Bill	S	6-1	180	27	5	Michigan State	14
78	Slater, Jackie	G-T	6-4	270	24	3	Jackson State	14
27	Thomas, Pat	CB	5-9	180	24	3	Texas A & M	14
26	Tyler, Wendell	RB-KR	5-10	188	23	2	UCLA	14
80	Waddy, Billy	WR-KR	5-11	185	24	2	Colorado	14
19	Walker, Glen	P-K	6-1	210	26	2	Southern Cal.	14
20	Wallace, Jackie	S-CB	6-3	198	27	5	Arizona	10
75	Williams, John	T	6-3	265	33	11	Minnesota	14
86	Young, Charlie	TE	6-4	235	27	6	Southern Cal.	14
85	Youngblood, Jack	DE	6-4	242	28	8	Florida	14
53	Youngblood, Jim	LB	6-3	239	28	6	Tennessee Tech	14

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the lion's share of last season with an injury.

The kicking game has never been a strong point for the Rams, but things are looking up in the placement department, where the resident booter is Rafael Septien, who hit on 32 PATs and 18 field goals last season. The punting game is also on the upswing, although regular Glen Walker—who averaged 35.2 per attempt in '77—will have to cut down on his number (eight) of blocked kicks.

**GAMEPLAN CONCLUSION:** Well, this is it, make-or-break time in LA, where the only thing the team was heretofore said to be lacking (an imaginative head coach) was added when George Allen signed on. No one this side of P. T. Barnum has more imagination than Allen! And when you put together a skipper with the leadership skill of an Allen, and a team with as much talent as the Rams, the result has to be an explosion that will be heard around the rest of

the NFL. The Rams will rally their offense around underrated quarterback Haden, who doesn't get a lot of publicity but always seems to handle any assignment given him. With Haden pitching to wide receivers Jackson, Waddy and Jessie, and the tight end duo of Nelson and Young, the passing attack should be more dynamic. Especially since Allen has always had a warm spot in his heart for a strong aerial game. However, the rushing attack certainly won't be overlooked as a means of moving the football, and top honcho McCutcheon should move it all by himself for another 1,000 yards this season, with help from reliable ball toters like Cappelletti and Tyler. The offensive line is about seven different shades of strong, and you can make that eight different shades if stalwarts like Dennis Harrah stay injury-free. The defensive unit is deep, deeper and just plain bottomless, with so much talent at every position it's no wonder the Rams per-

ennially rank among the NFL leaders. Led by all-stars like Jack Youngblood, Brooks, Robertson and Monte Jackson, the LA defense is one of the best in pro football, so good in fact that other regulars like Dryer, Jim Youngblood, Elmen-dorf and Simpson often get lost in the shuffle of talent. And on top of all that, how would you like to also have young prospects the caliber of Brudzinski and Cromwell just sitting on the bench waiting for their chances? So that's the way it is as George Allen embarks on his second tour-of-duty with the Rams, a team that should be able to wrap up its sixth consecutive NFC West title in '78 with somewhere between 11 and 14 wins under the new 16-game schedule set-up. But we just don't think the Rams have the right combination to unseat the Dallas Cowboys for the National Conference championship and claim the automatic berth in Super Bowl XIII that would go along with such a feat.

# Atlanta Falcons

(7-7-0)

It was defense, defense and more DEFENSE for last year's Falcons, who established an NFL record by limiting regular season opponents to only 129 points. But, alas, the team's offensive unit was the proverbial other side of the coin, scoring an anemic total of 17 touchdowns, the main reason Atlanta had to settle for a breakeven mark (7-7) instead of the playoff berth they most coveted.

"It was the offense that suffered the key injuries (last season)," Coach Leeman Bennett reflects, "we lost our most experienced lineman in Len Gotshalk, our fastest running back in Bubba Bean and our starting quarterback, Steve Bartkowski."

Okay, we'll go along with that assessment to some extent, and agree those injuries—especially the one to Bartkowski—had a deleterious effect on the attack. But just as much a factor in the punchless offense was the lack of experience in certain areas, a shortcoming even Coach Bennett admits to.

"There are no magic formulas for experience," says Bennett, "a player can only play and learn from his mistakes."

**OFFENSE:** One member of the offensive unit still a bit lacking in experience, although he's in his fourth NFL season, is quarterback Bartkowski. "Bart" has spent almost as much time nursing injuries as he was playing, including last year when he missed seven games and wound up completing only 64 of 136 passes, five for touchdowns, while giving up 13 interceptions.

Bartkowski is a former No. 1 draft pick ('75) with a strong passing arm and all the tools of a competent pro signal caller. However, recurrent knee injuries have robbed him of most of his mobility, resulting in 29 sacks for 296 lost yards in '77, and a quarterback who can't scramble is a "sitting duck" for enemy pass rushers.

The No. 2 signal caller is Scott Hunter,

## 1978 Schedule

Sep 3	HOUSTON
Sep 10	at Los Angeles
Sep 17	CLEVELAND
Sep 24	at Tampa Bay
Oct 1	NEW YORK GIANTS
Oct 8	at Pittsburgh
Oct 15	DETROIT
Oct 22	at San Francisco
Oct 30	LOS ANGELES
Nov 5	SAN FRANCISCO
Nov 12	at New Orleans
Nov 19	at Chicago
Nov 26	NEW ORLEANS
Dec 3	at Cincinnati
Dec 10	WASHINGTON
Dec 17	at St. Louis

the starter through the early part of last season when he completed 70 of 151 passes. Hunter's a journeyman quarterback with previous experience at Green Bay and Buffalo, and he could end up as the regular for the Falcons if Bartkowski can't stay healthy. Others available at the signal calling spot are Kim McQuilken and June Jones, who between them attempted only eight passes a year ago.

Wide receiver Alfred Jenkins is the top honcho in the pass catching corps, having led the team in '77 with 39 receptions for 677 yards and four touchdowns. Jenkins is one of the finest, though most underrated, deep threats in the league.

The other wide receiver is Wallace Francis, who carted 26 aeriels for 390 yards last season, but after him, there's a dearth of talent at the wide spots. Most prominent of the reserves are Billy Ryckman and Karl Farmer, who combined for a meager three pass receptions in '77. It's fair to say the passing attack will be in dire straits if the regulars (especially main-man Jenkins) can't stay healthy.

Cavorting at the tight end spot is ten-year veteran Jim Mitchell, who rambled for 178 yards on 17 catches last year.

Falcons	1977 Results	Opp
17	Los Angeles	6
6	at Washington	10
17	N.Y. Giants	3
7	at San Francisco	0
0	at Buffalo	3
16	at Chicago	10
7	Minnesota	14
3	San Francisco	10
17	Detroit	6
20	at New Orleans	21
17	at Tampa Bay	0
10	New England	16
7	at Los Angeles	23
35	New Orleans	7

Mitchell is the team's all-time leader in receptions (257), yards (3,864) and touchdowns (24). Backing him up is Greg McCrary, who caught only two passes in '77 but hauled one 49 yards for a touchdown.

As far as sheer power is concerned, the Falcons are in excellent shape at running back, with a group of ball toters who could run through a cinder block wall. But outside running speed is another matter altogether, and the ground game will never hit its peak until someone with quickness emerges to take the pressure off the big bulls.

Chief among the veteran ball carriers is Haskel Stanback, who bolted for a team-leading 873 yards and six touchdowns on 247 carries last season. The other starting running back at the end of the '77 campaign was Woody Thompson, another "blaster" who powered for an additional 478 yards via the ground route.

Rounding out the cast of prospects at running back are Billy Pritchett, Monroe Eley, Mike Esposito, Secedrick McIntyre and Bubba Bean, but the latter is the only one with the speed to give the rushing attack an outside threat. Bean is a 4.5 flyer

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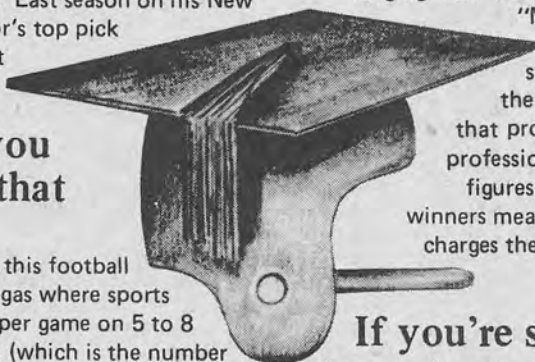
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who missed last season, and his return will benefit the ground game immensely.

The offensive line, while not quite trouble-free, has the potential for improvement if the young players continue to get better and injuries are held to a minimum. Making up the right side of the front wall are tackle Warren Bryant and guard R. C. Thielemann, both of whom made the league's all-rookie team last season, and they should have bright futures ahead of them.

Opposite them are tackle Brent Adams and guard Dave Scott, while over the ball at center is Jeff Van Note, a steady 10-year veteran and one of the better pivots in the NFC. Reserve strength in the line is only average, consisting of tackle Phil McKinnely, guard Jeff Yeates and center Paul Ryczek, but the return of former regular Len Gotshalk—out last year with an injury—should be a big help in this area.

**DEFENSE:** A standing ovation is in order for the defensive unit which, in addition to holding opponents to just 129 points, also ranked among the NFL leaders in both rushing (132.7 yards-per-game) and passing (98.9 per game) defense last season. And provided most of the stalwarts who comprise this unit stay healthy, Atlanta's stop troops will be just as stingy this time around.

Steamrolling in from one line flank is Pro Bowler Claude Humphrey, the inspirational leader on defense who put the sack on ten enemy quarterbacks last season. At the other terminal is Jeff Merrow, a rough-and-tumble defender credited with ten sacks of his own in '77, and he joins with Humphrey to give the Falcons one of the best tandems around.

Inside at the tackle holes, the regulars are Jim Bailey and Mike Lewis, although one of them will probably lose his starting job to Wilson Faumuina, a No. 1 draft pick last year. Faumuina is a 275-pound battering ram with all the ear-marks of a superb down lineman, and he should start coming into his own now that he's picked up some experience. The foremost reserves in the defensive line are Edgar Fields and Jeff Yeates, the latter also a back-up offensive guard.

The linebacking corps is in good shape, and the man in the middle is Ralph Ortega, who took over in '77 when longtime stalwart Tommy Nobis retired. Ortega turned in a solid all-around performance that included four pass interceptions. Supplying depth at middle linebacker is second-year pro Ron McCartney, a 220-pounder with good range.

The elder statesman in the 'backer corps is Greg Brezina, who patrols the weak outside spot, while at the other corner is Robert Pennywell, a promising young defender who ran a pass interception back 20 yards for a touchdown in '77. However, Pennywell will have to keep hustling if he wants to hold off Fulton Kuykendall, a former starter fully recovered from an injury that sidelined him last season and determined to re-claim his old spot. Rounding out the linebacking crew are reserves Dewey McClain, Andy Spiva and Rick Kay.

As we mentioned earlier, the Falcons were extremely hard to pass against in '77, when they held enemy quarterbacks to a 44.1 percent completion rate and in-

## Atlanta Falcons Rookie Roster

(Listed in order of selection)

NAME	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
Kenn, Mike	T	6-6	245	Michigan
Stewart, Steve	LB	6-3	217	Minnesota
Waldemore, Stan	G	6-4	246	Nebraska
Cabral, Brian	LB	6-1	207	Colorado
Pearson, Dennis	WR	5-11	177	San Diego St
Parker, Rodney	WR	6-1	180	Tennessee St
Jackson, Alfred	WR	6-1	183	Texas
Wright, James	TE	6-4	232	Texas Christian
Adkins, David	LB	6-2	209	Ohio State
Williams, David	DB	6-0	170	Tennessee-Martin
Pridemore, Tom	DB	5-10	180	West Virginia
Patton, Ricky	RB	6-1	180	Jackson St
Strong, Ray	RB	5-9	184	Nevada-Las Vegas
Reed, Milton	DB	5-9	174	Baylor
Butler, Daria	LB	6-3	202	Oklahoma St

## Atlanta Falcons 1978 Veteran Roster

NO	NAME	POS	HT	WT	AGE	YR	COLLEGE	GAMES IN '77
61	Adams, Brent	T	6-5	256	26	4	Tenn-Chattanooga	14
72	Bailey, Jim	DE	6-5	260	30	9	Kansas	14
10	Bartkowski, Steve	QB	6-4	213	26	4	California	8
44	Bean, Bubba	RB	5-11	195	24	2	Texas A&M	0
50	Brezina, Greg	LB	6-1	221	32	11	Houston	14
34	Brown, Ray	S	6-2	202	29	8	West Texas St	14
66	Bryant, Warren	T	6-6	270	23	2	Kentucky	14
38	Byas, Rick	S	5-9	180	28	5	Wayne State	14
32	Easterling, Ray	S	6-0	192	29	7	Richmond	14
46	Eley, Monroe	RB	6-2	210	29	4	Arizona St	7
26	Esposito, Mike	RB	6-0	183	25	3	Boston Coll	14
80	Farmer, Karl	WR	5-11	165	24	3	Pittsburgh	14
74	Faumuina, Wilson	DT	6-5	275	24	2	San Jose St	14
77	Fields, Edgar	DT	6-2	255	24	2	Texas A&M	14
89	Francis, Wallace	WR	5-11	190	27	6	Arkansas AM&N	14
65	Gotshalk, Len	T	6-4	259	29	7	Humboldt State	0
87	Humphrey, Claude	DE	6-5	265	34	11	Tennessee St	14
16	Hunter, Scott	QB	6-2	205	31	8	Alabama	7
6	James, John	P	6-3	200	29	7	Florida	14
84	Jenkins, Alfred	WR	5-10	172	26	4	Morris Brown	14
14	Jones, June	QB	6-4	200	25	2	Portland State	1
58	Kay, Rick	LB	6-4	235	29	5	Colorado	12
54	Kuykendall, Fulton	LB	6-5	225	28	4	UCLA	5
22	Lawrence, Rolland	CB	5-10	179	27	6	Tabor	14
69	Lewis, Mike	DT	6-4	261	29	8	Arkansas AM&N	14
56	McCartney, Ron	LB	6-1	220	24	2	Tennessee	14
52	McClain, Dewey	LB	6-3	236	24	3	E Cent, Oklahoma	13
88	McCrary, Greg	TE	6-3	230	26	4	Clark	13
41	McIntyre, Secedrick	RB	5-10	190	24	2	Auburn	6
73	McKinnely, Phil	T	6-4	248	24	3	UCLA	14
11	McQuilken, Kim	QB	6-2	203	27	5	Lehigh	7
75	Merrow, Jeff	DE	6-4	230	25	4	West Virginia	14
86	Mitchell, Jim	TE	6-1	236	31	10	Prairie View	12
45	Moriarty, Tom	S	6-0	185	25	2	Bowling Green	14
55	Ortega, Ralph	LB	6-2	220	25	4	Florida	14
59	Pennywell, Robert	LB	6-1	222	24	3	Grambling	14
39	Pritchett, Billy	RB	6-3	230	27	4	West Texas St	9
28	Reed, Frank	CB	5-11	193	24	3	Washington	14
82	Ryckman, Billy	WR	5-11	172	23	2	Louisiana Tech	14
53	Ryczek, Paul	C	6-2	230	26	5	Virginia	14
70	Scott, Dave	T	6-4	285	25	3	Kansas	14
51	Spiva, Andy	LB	6-2	220	23	2	Tennessee	13
24	Stanback, Kaskel	RB	6-0	210	26	5	Tennessee	14
1	Steinfert, Fred	KS	5-11	180	26	3	Boston College	7
68	Thielemann, R.C.	G	6-4	247	23	2	Arkansas	14
48	Thompson, Woody	RB	6-1	228	26	3	Miami	14
57	Van Note, Jeff	C	6-2	247	32	10	Kentucky	14
79	Yeates, Jeff	DT	6-3	248	27	6	Boston College	13

tercepted 26 aerals. And the premier ball-hawk in the deep zones is cornerback Roland Lawrence, who led the NFC with seven pass thefts last year and was selected to play in the Pro Bowl for the first time in his career. Lawrence is one of those "diamonds-in-the-rough" who originally signed with the Falcons as a free agent in '73, and he's established himself as one of the finest cornerbacks in the league.

On the prowl at the opposite corner is Rick Byas, a good cover man who intercepted three passes last season and ran one back 70 yards to paydirt. The most seasoned reserve at cornerback is Frank Reed, a sometimes starter in the past capable of filling in if one of the regulars needs a rest.

Firmly entrenched at the strong safety position is eight-year veteran Ray Brown, who pilfered five passes a year ago, and he's been a fixture in the secondary since joining the team in '71. Ray Easterling, who came up with four more interceptions last season, is the regular at free safety. However, the only reserve at safety with much experience (and that's limited) is second-year pro Tom Moriarty, and this could be an Achilles' heel.

Without reservation, the strongest part of the team's kicking game is the punting, which is handled by John James, a two-time Pro Bowl selection who averaged 41.1 yards-a-boot in '77 and rolled 21 of his kicks dead inside the 20-yard line. Fred Steinfort, an ex-Oakland Raider, is the placekicker, and he converted 13 PATs and six field goals after joining the Falcons mid-way through last season.

1977 LEADERS					
PASS	A/C	INT	YDS	TD	
Hunter	151/70	3	898	2	
Bartkowski	136/64	13	796	5	
REC	NO	YDS	AVG	TD	
Jenkins	39	677	17.4	4	
Stanback	30	261	8.7	0	
INT	NO	YDS	AVG	TD	
Lawrence	7	138	19.7	0	
Brown	5	56	11.2	0	
RUSH	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD	
Stanback	247	873	3.5	6	
Thompson	132	478	3.6	1	
PUNT	NO	YDS	AVG	BK	
James	105	4349	41.4	13	
Mike-Mayer	1	23	23.0	0	
SCORE	TD	EP/MA	FG/MA	PTS	
Stanback	6	0/0	0/0	36	
Steinfort	0	13/13	6/15	31	

**GAMEPLAN CONCLUSION:** After many years of trial and tribulation, the Falcons finally started putting things together last season, when they climbed to second place in the NFC West with their best won-lost mark since 1973. And GAMEPLAN couldn't have agreed more when the mastermind of that success story, Leeman Bennett, was voted the NFL's coach-of-the-year in '77. Entering just his second season at the team's helm, Coach Bennett is confident the Falcons can continue their winning ways. However, in order for Atlanta to improve, it is essential they get a stronger performance from their offensive unit so that the defense won't have to shoulder such a big burden. Step number one toward bolster-

1977 Regular Season Statistics		
	FALCONS	OPP
FIRST DOWNS	198	192
NET RUSH	1890	1858
Avg Per Game	135.0	132.7
NET PASS	1357	1384
Att/Comp	297/140	320/141
Had Int	16	26
Avg Per Game	96.9	98.9
PUNTS/AVG	106/41.2	99/38.6
Punts Return/Yds	59/402	58/519
Avg Per Return	6.8	8.9
KICKOFF-RET/YDS	34/621	43/1021
Avg Per Return	18.3	23.7
FUMBLES/LOST	28/9	35/22
FIELD GOALS	13/30	9/16
PATS	20/20	12/15
TOTAL POINTS	179	129

ing the attack is getting a consistent effort from quarterback Bartkowski, who could be a whale of a signal caller if only he didn't get hurt so much. Reserve quarterback Hunter has the moxie to run the offense if needed, but we just don't think he's a strong enough passer to make the aerial attack a major factor. The passing game would also benefit if another reliable receiver emerged to take some of the pressure off top pass grabbers Jenkins and Mitchell. What the rushing game desperately needs is a speedburner to compliment "big bulls" like Stanback, Thompson and company. Bubba Bean seems the logical choice to fill that role, provided he stops getting hurt so much. With the exception of veterans like Van

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Note and Gotshalk, the offensive line is young and getting better all the time led by hosses like Bryant and Thielemann. Quite obviously, the cornerstone of Atlanta's resurgence is the defensive unit, and as anyone who follows pro football knows, a stout-hearted defense is a "must" for a team with championship aspirations. The most noteworthy of the defenders are Humphrey and Lawrence, both selected to play in the last Pro Bowl, but equal amounts of praise have to go to others like Merrow, Brezina, Ray Brown and Ortega. Keep an eye on young tackle

Faumuina, who could be a holy terror now that he's picked up some valuable experience. However, reserve strength on defense is only average, so it's important that the regulars keep their injuries down. Like we said earlier, Coach Bennett deserves lavish praise for the outstanding job he's done with the Falcons, a team capable of even bigger things this season if the players continue to give it a 110-percent effort. Were it not for the unstable situation on offense, Atlanta would rate as a potential title contender in the NFC West, although that would involve the

Herculean task of overhauling the powerful Los Angeles Rams. But we have to think the Falcon defense is strong enough to make up for a lot of the offensive deficiencies and lead Atlanta to another winning record in '78, posting somewhere between eight and ten wins under the NFL's expanded 16-game schedule. And while we doubt the Falcons can unseat the perennial NFC West kingpin Rams, don't forget there are two wild card berths up for grabs this year in the National Conference, and Atlanta just might be able to claim one of them.

# San Francisco 49ers

(5-9-0)

The beat goes on in San Francisco, where the 49ers have been going through head coaches faster than a junk-food addict gobbles up Big Macs. Latest to answer the call is Pete McCulley, taking over for the ousted Ken Meyer, who lasted just one season after replacing Monte Clark, who led the team one year after taking the reins from . . . well, you get the idea.

However, the steady turnover in coaches could be a thing of the past for the 49ers if the highly-regarded McCulley, formerly an offensive assistant with Baltimore and Washington, lives up to expectations. Actually, the 46-year-old McCulley was the No. 1 choice to fill the head coaching job in San Francisco last year, but was unable to do so since he was still under contract with the Redskins.

Heading into his first full season as skipper, McCulley inherits a talented 49er team that was a big disappointment in '77 when they fell back to third place in the NFC West. And while it seems a bit much to expect the rookie head coach to transform the Niners into a title contender overnight, there's every reason to expect the team to play a more prominent role in the proceedings this time around.

In order for that improvement to take place, McCulley's first assignment will be to perk up an offense that moved the football well on the ground last season but was woefully lacking in the passing department, netting just 107.7 yards-per-game through the air lanes.

"I believe in balance (on offense)," McCulley explains, "but I also believe in utilizing the big play when the opportunity presents itself. I want a hard-nosed running attack, but I want to see the big pass play, too."

**OFFENSE:** That statement will probably be music to the ears of quarterback Jim Plunkett, one of the strongest throwers in the game, who attempted 248 passes last season, completing 128 for 1,693 yards and nine touchdowns. With heavier emphasis on the passing game, Plunkett should find working under rookie coach McCulley the most pleasant experience he's had since coming to the 49ers in a trade with the New England Patriots.

The back-up situation at the signal calling spot is no better than average, consisting of Scott Bull and Steve DeBerg, and the offense could start mis-firing if Plunkett sustains an injury. Bull was the

## 1978 Schedule

Sep 3	at Cleveland
Sep 10	CHICAGO
Sep 17	at Houston
Sep 24	at New York Giants
Oct 1	CINCINNATI
Oct 8	at Los Angeles
Oct 15	NEW ORLEANS
Oct 22	ATLANTA
Oct 29	at Washington
Nov 5	at Atlanta
Nov 12	ST. LOUIS
Nov 19	LOS ANGELES
Nov 27	PITTSBURGH
Dec 3	at New Orleans
Dec 10	TAMPA BAY
Dec 17	at Detroit

49ers	1977 Results	Opp
0	at Pittsburgh	27
15	Miami	19
14	at Los Angeles	34
0	Atlanta	7
17	at N.Y. Giants	20
28	Detroit	7
20	Tampa Bay	10
10	at Atlanta	3
10	at New Orleans	7
10	Los Angeles	23
20	New Orleans	17
27	at Minnesota	28
35	Dallas	42
14	at Green Bay	16

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most active of the reserve quarterbacks in '77, but his passing stats (only 29% completion ratio) underscore just how much work is needed before he'll be ready to handle the job.

Heading up the pass catching brigade for the umpteenth consecutive year is wide receiver Gene Washington, who averaged 19.9 yards and raced under five scoring aeriels on 32 catches last season. Heading into his 10th pro season, Washington already holds several team receiving records, and he's one of those rare athletes who—like good wine—seems to get better with age.

The other starting wide receiver is Kenny Harrison, who picked up 217 yards on 15 catches last fall, but he'll be lucky to hang onto that job. Pressing him will be Willie McGee and Jim Lash, both recovered from injuries that limited their play last season when they combined for only five pass receptions. Also in the running is speedy Elmo Boyd, who spent all of last year (his first in the NFL) on the injured reserve list.

Twelve-year veteran Tom Mitchell, a crunching blocker who hauled in 19 passes last season, holds sway at tight end. Backing him up are Jim Obradovich and Paul Seal. Seal is a gifted receiver who averaged 17.7 yards on 13 catches in '77, and he could be the starter at tight end if his blocking improves.

When you talk about great 1-2 running punches in the NFL, right near the top of the list is the 49er tandem of Delvin Williams and Wilbur Jackson. A year ago, the elusive Williams dashed for 931 yards and seven TDs on 268 rushing attempts,

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while Jackson blasted for an additional 780 yards and led the running backs with 22 pass receptions. The combination of the outside speed represented by Williams and Jackson's bullish power up the middle gives the rushing attack tremendous balance, which makes it that much harder for enemy defenses to cope with the 49er ground game.

The best of a limited group of reserves at running back are Bobby Ferrell, Paul Hofer and Dave Williams, so it's important the regular ball toters (Del Williams and Jackson) avoid getting hurt. The most promising of the back-ups is Dave Williams, a second-year pro with great open-field running ability who averaged 26.2 yards on punt returns in '77 and hauled one back 80 yards for a touchdown.

In the offensive line, the 49ers have a nucleus of battle-tested veterans in the starting rotation. But there's an overall lack of depth up front that makes this area suspect, and a major outbreak of injuries in the line would severely hinder the offense.

The tackle holes are occupied by Jean Barrett and Keith Fahnhorst, with sup-

port from Ron Singleton, a two-year pro who may not have a lot of experience, but sure is big enough at 6-7 and 275 pounds. Expected to add some extra depth at tackle is Cas Banaszek, a former starter returning after missing last season with an injury.

Woody Peoples and Steve Lawson are stationed at the guard positions, while in between them at the pivot spot is Randy Cross, a good center who needs some additional weight. The best reserve at guard is Johnny Miller, a squatty (6-1, 245) blocker with starting potential, while back-up help at center is provided by John Ayers, who can also fill in at tackle.

**DEFENSE:** The Gold Rush and Company. That's an apt description of the 49ers' defensive unit, which consists of a brilliant front wall (the Gold Rush) and a number of problems at linebacker and in the secondary, areas that were riddled by injuries last season.

Guarding one line flank is the inspirational leader for the Gold Rush, Cedrick Hardman, second on the team last year with 12½ quarterback sacks. His counterpart at the other terminal is able veteran Tommy Hart. Supplying depth at the

### San Francisco Forty Niner 1978 Veteran Roster

NO.	NAME	POS	HT	WT	AGE	YRS	COLLEGE	GAMES
								IN '77
68	Ayers, John	T	6-5	247	25	2	West Texas	14
41	Baldassin, Mike	LB	6-1	218	23	1	Washington	10
77	Barrett, Jean	T	6-6	250	27	6	Tulsa	14
26	Black, Stan	SS	6-0	196	22	1	Miss. State	14
54	Bradley, Ed	LB	6-1	225	28	7	Wake Forest	14
19	Bull, Scott	QB	6-5	215	25	3	Arkansas	10
28	Burns, Mike	CB	6-0	181	24	1	Southern California	9
82	Cline, Tony	DE	6-2	237	30	9	Miami (Fla)	10
76	Cooke, Bill	DT-DE	6-6	243	27	4	Massachusetts	12
51	Cross, Randy	C	6-3	250	24	3	UCLA	14
17	Deberg, Steve	QB	6-2	205	24	1	San Jose State	0
72	Elam, Cleveland	DT	6-4	251	26	4	Tennessee State	14
55	Ella, Bruce	LB	6-1	220	25	4	Ohio State	14
71	Fahnhorst, Keith	T	6-6	263	26	5	Minnesota	12
38	Farrell, Bob	RB	6-0	219	25	3	UCLA	10
75	Galigher, Ed	DT	6-5	247	28	7	UCLA	10
86	Hardman, Cedrick	DE	6-4	244	29	9	N. Texas State	14
59	Harper, Willie	LB	6-2	295	28	6	Nebraska	12
83	Harrison, Kenny	WR	6-0	164	24	3	Southern Methodist	14
53	Hart, Tommy	DE	6-4	246	33	11	Morris Brown	14
36	Hofer, Paul	RB	6-0	193	26	3	Mississippi	12
40	Jackson, Wilbur	RB	6-1	213	26	5	Alabama	14
87	Lash, Jim	WR	6-2	200	26	6	Northwestern	12
65	Lawson, Steve	G	6-3	257	29	8	Kansas	14
42	Leonard, Anthony	KR-CB	5-11	165	25	3	Virginia Union	14
22	Lewis, Eddle	CB-S	6-0	174	24	3	Kansas	14
47	Mathews, Al	CB	5-10	190	31	9	Texas A & I	12
81	McGee, Willie	WR	5-11	178	28	6	Alcorn State	6
49	McGill, Ralph	PR-S	5-11	180	28	7	Tulsa	8
66	Miller, Johnny	G	6-1	147	24	2	Livingstone	12
84	Mitchell, Tom	TE	6-4	226	34	12	Bucknell	13
89	Obradovich, Jim	TE	6-2	227	25	4	Southern California	14
69	Peoples, Woody	G	6-2	250	35	10	Grambling	14
32	Phillips, Mel	S	6-2	185	36	13	N. Carolina A & T	14
16	Plunkett, Jim	QB	6-2	207	30	8	Stanford	14
85	Seal, Paul	TE	6-4	223	26	5	Michigan	14
67	Singleton, Ron	T	6-7	275	26	3	Grambling	12
58	Stidham, Howard	LB	6-2	214	23	2	Tennessee Tech	10
44	Taylor, Bruce	CB	6-0	178	30	9	Boston University	14
52	Vanderbundt, Skip	LB	6-3	225	31	10	Oregon State	14
18	Washington, Gene	WR	6-1	180	31	10	Stanford	14
74	Webb, Jimmy	DT	6-5	245	26	4	Mississippi State	14
14	Wersching, Ray	K	5-11	210	28	6	California	12
30	Williams, Dave	RB	6-2	200	24	1	Colorado	14
24	Williams, Delvin	RB	6-0	195	27	5	Kansas	14
13	Wittum, Tom	P	6-1	198	28	6	N. Illinois	14

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end positions is Tony Cline, a former starter for the Oakland Raiders.

Inside at the tackles, one spot is the stronghold of Cleveland Elam, a two-time Pro Bowl selection who led the 49ers last year with 18½ sacks. Boy, that's more sacks than some teams get in a single season! At the other tackle is Jimmy Webb, an on-again, off-again performer who could be a standout if he settles down. Waiting in the wings at tackle are Ed Galigher and Bill Cooke.

Linebackers were going down left and right with injuries in '77, but this area should be much stronger with everyone back in harness. On duty at middle 'backer is Bruce Elia, with reserve help from Ed Bradley, both steady defenders with an aggregate nine years of NFL experience.

Patrolling the corner linebacking spots are Skip Vanderbundt and Willie Harper, while supplying depth on the outside are Mike Baldassin and Howard Stidham. Harper's a promising six-year pro with all-star potential, but he'll have to avoid the nagging injuries that have hampered him in the past. Other veterans counted on for help at linebacker are former regulars Dave Washington and Dale Mitchell, both of whom wound up last season on the injured reserve list. Before he was sidelined in '77, Washington was having a great year with numerous tackles and two pass interceptions, the latter figure good enough to tie him for the team lead in that department.

The 49ers are about ready to hang up a "help wanted" sign in the secondary, where they need defenders equally skilled at stopping the pass or the run. You can take our word for it that finding players of that ilk is no easier than uncovering the proverbial needle in the haystack.

The most solid performer in the deep zones is strong safety Mel Phillips, a reckless tackler who swiped two enemy aeri- als in '77. Opposite him at free safety is Stan Black, who saw extensive duty as a rookie last year and paid the price for his lack of experience. Two players who missed time in '77 with injuries, Ralph McGill and Bruce Rhodes, are back and are being looked to for additional depth at safety. McGill, a regular until he got banged-up, might be able to take back his starting job on the weak side.

Stationed at the cornerback positions are Bruce Taylor and Eddie Lewis, but they'll have to tighten up their belts and get to work if they want to remain starters. In reserve at the corners are Tony Leonard and Mike Burns. Leonard is a speedy defender with the ability to claim a regular job in the deep zones.

The punting is taken care of by Tom Wittum, who averaged 36.4 yards on 77 kicks last season, while the placement kicking is handled by Ray Werschling. Last season, his first with the 49ers, Werschling connected on 33 PATs and 10 field goals, and he won both games in '77 against the New Orleans Saints (10-7, 20-17) by converting clutch field goal attempts.

Players have been coming and going at a rapid rate in 'Frisko, thanks to the wheeling-and-dealing of General Manager Joe Thomas. The "big name" in those transactions is explosive running back O.J. Simpson, acquired from the

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Games See page 65

1977 LEADERS					
PASS	A/C	INT	YDS	TD	
Plunkett	248/128	14	1693	9	
Bull	24/7	2	89	0	
REC	NO	YDS	AVG	TD	
Washington, G.	32	638	19.9	5	
Jackson	22	169	7.7	0	
INT	NO	YDS	AVG	TD	
Washington, D.	2	68	34.0	0	
Phillips	2	23	11.5	0	
RUSH	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD	
Willms, Del	268	931	3.5	7	
Jackson	179	780	4.4	7	
PUNT	NO	YDS	AVG	BK	
Wittum	77	2801	36.4	5	
SCORE	TD	EP/MA	FG/MA	PTS	
Willms, Del	9	0/0	0/0	54	
Werschling	0	23/23	10/17	53	

### 1977 Regular Season Statistics

	49ERS	OPP
FIRST DOWNS	220	220
NET RUSH	2086	1869
Avg Per Game	149.0	133.5
NET PASS	1508	1589
Att/Comp	277/136	270/139
Had Int	17	8
Avg Per Game	107.7	113.5
PUNTS/AVG	80/35.0	86/37.5
Punts Return/Yds	48/292	47/444
Avg Per Return	6.1	9.4
KICKOFF-RET/YDS	49/1166	47/1025
Avg Per Return	24.0	21.8
FUMBLES/LOST	27/8	20/10
FIELD GOALS	11/19	13/22
PATS	25/27	29/32
TOTAL POINTS	220	260

Buffalo Bills in exchange for a couple of future draft picks. And the "Juice" should be the main weapon in the 49ers' offensive arsenal if he's mended from knee surgery that sidelined him most of last season. The 49ers also picked up wide receiver/kick returner Freddie Solomon

## San Francisco 49ers Rookie Roster

(Listed in order of selection)

NAME	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
MacAfee, Ken	TE	6-4	251	Notre Dame
Bunz, Dan	LB	6-4	220	Long Beach St
Downing, Walt	G	6-4	251	Michigan
Hughes, Ernie	G	6-3	241	Notre Dame
Le Count, Terry	WR	6-0	179	Florida
Reese, Archie	DT	6-3	235	Clemson
Threadgill, Bruce	DB	6-0	185	Mississippi St
Walker, Elliott	RB	5-11	198	Pittsburgh
Quillan, Fred	C	6-5	223	Oregon
Redden, Herman	DB	6-0	172	Howard
Moore, Dean	LB	6-2	197	Iowa
McDaniels, Steve	T	6-6	264	Notre Dame
Connell, Mike	P	6-1	195	Cincinnati
McCray, Willie	DE	6-4	240	Troy State
Irons, Dan	T	6-7	260	Texas Tech

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and defensive cornerback Vern Roberson in a swap for running back Delvin Williams with the Miami Dolphins, and both Solomon and Roberson could nail down starting jobs at their respective positions with the Niners. On the negative side, the 49ers lost the services of former Pro Bowl defensive end Tommy Hart, who played out his option with 'Frisco and signed with the Chicago Bears, although there's enough strength in the front wall to compensate for his loss.

**GAMEPLAN CONCLUSION:** At least for the time being, the head coaching situation in San Francisco should be more stable with Pete McCulley—hand-picked for the job by GM Joe Thomas—taking over. And just a little stability will probably be enough to get the talented 49ers back on the winning track after the mish-mash that was last season. New skipper McCulley is determined to open

up the offense, which means throwing the ball more, and he's got a prime slinger in quarterback Plunkett. The big guy from Stanford can cut loose with the long bomb as well as anybody in the league, and he's got a superb target for his aeriels in Gene Washington. However, unless one of the other wide receivers comes through on a consistent basis, double-team coverage will again be the order of the day for Washington. And even he will have trouble with enemy defenders dogging his every step. It would also benefit the aerial game if one of the tight ends got untracked as a pass grabber running the "suicide" routes over the middle. The rushing attack will be the main source of offensive punch, powered by Del Williams and Wilbur Jackson, both capable of 1,000-yard seasons. But the reserve strength at running back is thin, which can be a problem when a team relies on the rushing game as much as the 49ers.

The offensive line is no bed-of-roses, but the veteran make-up of this gang should get them by, provided injuries are held to a minimum. Defensively, the strength is the front wall, bulwarked by two of the better down linemen (Elam and Hardman) in the NFC. The rest of the cast up front is solid, if unspectacular, and depth is adequate. At linebacker and in the secondary, the picture isn't so bright, although if the regulars in these areas stay healthier than they have in the past, things will be much improved. Overall, this is a quality team Coach McCulley will lead into the '78 NFL season, and with a few breaks along the way, the 49ers could notch as many as eight or nine wins. This would enable them to finish over .500 under the new 16-game scheduling format. It might also allow the 49ers to climb back to second place in the NFC West ahead of the defensively-strong, but offensively-impotent, Atlanta Falcons.

# New Orleans Saints

(3-11-0)

With the exception of the neo-expansionist teams from Seattle and Tampa Bay, the Saints are the only club in the NFL that has never (repeat, never) logged a winning regular season mark. This tells you why New Orleans has hired and fired so many head coaches during their 11-year history. It was suggested the team change its theme song from "When the Saints Go Marching In" to something more fitting, like "When the Coaches Go Marching Out."

The last skipper to bite the dust was Hank Stram, who got the axe when the Saints folded like an accordion at the end of last season, losing consecutive games to—oh, the shame of it—the Tampa Bay Bucs (33-14) and the Atlanta Falcons (35-7). At the time of Stram's dismissal, team owner John Mecom, Jr. summed up the situation best when he commented: "I saw nothing (about the '77 Saints) that indicated progress."

So it's out with Stram and in with Dick Nolan, who came to the Saints just last season as a defensive assistant. Previous to that, Nolan had served eight years (1968-74) as skipper of the San Francisco

## 1978 Schedule

Sep 3	MINNESOTA
Sep 10	at Green Bay
Sep 17	PHILADELPHIA
Sep 24	at Cincinnati
Oct 1	LOS ANGELES
Oct 8	CLEVELAND
Oct 15	at San Francisco
Oct 22	at Los Angeles
Oct 29	NEW YORK GIANTS
Nov 5	at Pittsburgh
Nov 12	ATLANTA
Nov 19	at Dallas
Nov 26	at Atlanta
Dec 3	SAN FRANCISCO
Dec 10	HOUSTON
Dec 17	at Tampa Bay

49ers, leading them to the NFL West title three times during that span. Which means, at least in terms of background, the Saints hired a "winner" in Nolan.

Unfortunately, Nolan's image as a "winner" may be tarnished somewhat in his first year as head coach of the Saints, because this team has been on a treadmill going nowhere the past few seasons. The cause for that, obviously, has been the

Saints	1977 Results	Opp
20	Green Bay	24
19	at Detroit	23
42	at Chicago	24
0	San Diego	14
7	at Los Angeles	14
31	at St. Louis	49
27	Los Angeles	26
7	at Philadelphia	28
7	San Francisco	10
21	Atlanta	20
17	at San Francisco	20
13	N.Y. Jets	16
14	Tampa Bay	33
7	at Atlanta	35

relentless turnover in head coaches, a situation bound to have an adverse affect on togetherness and cohesion. As good a coach as Dick Nolan is, he'll still have trouble getting the Saints turned around in his maiden voyage at the helm.

**OFFENSE:** Running the attack, provided he can play one whole season without getting hurt, is Archie Manning. Last season, during one of his typical injury-plagued campaigns, Manning completed 113 of 205 aeriels, while passing for eight touchdowns and surrendering nine interceptions. These aren't half-bad stats by everyday standards.

However, the Saints believe Manning is more than just an "everyday" quarterback; they think he's a championship signal caller capable of leading his team out of the wilderness. Maybe that's true, but the jury will still be out on Manning until he can produce over the long haul, which means, quite bluntly, more time on the playing field and less in the whirlpool.

Woe be it unto the attack if Manning gets maimed again, forcing the Saints to employ one of their back-up signal callers, Bobby Scott or Bobby Douglass. Out of common decency, we won't even list the passing stats of that duo last

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season. But you can assume they were horrendous enough to convince anyone that if either Scott or Douglass has to take the offensive controls, the attack will start to skip. . . skip like a record stuck in a groove.

Injuries ripped holes in the pass catching corps last season, especially at wide receiver where Larry Burton, Tinker Owens and Joel Parker all missed playing time with various hurts. The end result in '77 was a pathetic passing attack that mustered only 112.3 yards-per-game via the aerial lanes.

The wide outs who saw the most action last season were Don Herrmann, who averaged 18.9 yards on 31 receptions but didn't catch a single scoring aerial, and veteran John Gilliam, no longer the long-distance threat he was during his All-Pro days with the Minnesota Vikings. The return of Burton, Owens and Parker will help at wide receiver, and so will the acquisition of Ike Harris, a rangy (6-5, 205) speedster picked up in a deal with the St. Louis Cardinals.

Prospects are much better at tight end, where the regular is Henry Childs, a solid blocker and vastly improved pass receiver who galloped for 514 yards and nine TDs on 33 catches last season. In reserve is Jim Thaxton, who added 16 catches and could be a starter if he wasn't such a nonchalant blocker.

"Thunder" and "Lightning" is the billing the Saints give their 1-2 running backs, Chuck Muncie and Tony Galbreath, both capable of 1,000-yard rushing seasons if their buddies in the

offensive line give them more blocking support. Hey, face it, you just do not crack 1,000 yards in the NFL without a big assist from the front wall, not even if you're Bronco Nagurski-Red Grange-Jim Brown all rolled into one!

Muncie bolted for 811 yards on 201 carries last season, and Galbreath notched another 644 yards on 168 sorties. They also teamed up for 62 pass receptions (Galbreath 41, Muncie 21) in '77, and wouldn't you just love to be head coach Nolan and have a couple of ball toters like "Thunder" and "Lightning" to power the rushing attack?

The top reserves at running back are Mike Strachan, Kim Jones and Greg Boykin. The best of that trio is Strachan, a former starter who notched 5.0 yards a

shot on 54 carries last season, but Jones and Boykin still have a lot to learn.

You'll remember we made an earlier reference to the offensive line, which wasn't very flattering. But in all candor, this unit just hasn't supplied enough blocking. Things could be looking up, however, if the Saints continue to add newcomers the caliber of guard Conrad Dobler, who came over with WR Harris in that deal with the St. Louis Cardinals.

Dobler, an all-NFC selection several times with the Cards and the self-proclaimed "meanest man in football," will step right into one guard spot, and he'll be matched with veteran Emanuel Zanders. In between them at the pivot position is John Hill, another seasoned performer, which should give the Saints

#### New Orleans Saints 1978 Veteran Roster

NO	NAME	POS	HT	WT	AGE	YR	COLLEGE	GAMES IN '77
16	Blanchard, Tom	P	6-0	180	29	8	Oregon	14
50	Bordelon, Ken	LB	6-4	226	24	3	LSU	14
25	Bosarge, Wade	S	5-11	175	23	2	Tulsa	5
36	Boykin, Greg	RB	6-0	225	25	2	Northwestern	14
80	Burton, Larry	WR	6-1	193	27	3	Purdue	1
73	Campbell, Joe	DE	6-6	254	23	2	Maryland	14
23	Cassady, Craig	S	5-11	175	25	2	Ohio State	12
24	Chapman, Clarence	CB	5-10	185	25	3	Eastern Michigan	14
85	Childs, Henry	TE	6-2	220	27	5	Kansas State	13
44	Christ, Chuck	S	6-2	205	27	7	Penn State	14
69	Dalton, Oakley	DT	6-6	295	26	2	Jackson State	1
66	Dobler, Conrad	G	6-0	255	28	7	Wyoming	14
58	Federspiel, Joe	LB	6-2	230	28	7	Kentucky	14
72	Fultz, Mike	DT	6-5	278	24	1	Nebraska	12
34	Galbreath, Tony	RB	6-1	230	24	3	Missouri	14
41	Gilliam, John	WR	6-1	187	33	2	So Carolina St	10
78	Grooms, Elio	DE	6-4	250	25	4	Tennessee Tech	14
56	Gross, Lee	C	6-3	235	25	4	Auburn	9
82	Harris, Ike	WR	6-3	205	26	4	Iowa State	14
87	Herrmann, Don	WR	6-2	193	31	10	Waynesboro	13
62	Hill, John	C	6-2	246	28	7	Lehigh	14
70	Hubbard, Dave	T	6-7	270	23	2	Brigham Young	4
54	Hughes, Pat	LB	6-2	225	31	9	Boston	14
30	Jackson, Ernie	CB	5-9	176	28	7	Duke	11
32	Jones, Kim	RB	6-4	253	26	3	Colorado St	14
53	Kingree, Rick	LB	6-1	222	29	8	Tulane	14
63	Knowles, Dave	G	6-6	250	23	1	Indiana	0
64	Lafary, Dave	G	6-7	280	23	2	Purdue	10
8	Manning, Archie	QB	6-3	200	29	8	Mississippi	10
40	Marsalis, Jim	S	5-11	190	33	9	Tennessee St	12
84	Mauti, Rich	WR-PR	6-0	190	24	2	Penn State	14
57	Merlo, Jim	LB	6-1	220	27	5	Stanford	14
77	Montgomery, Marv	T	6-6	255	30	8	Southern Cal	14
74	Moore, Derland	DT	6-4	253	27	6	Oklahoma	10
76	Morrison, Don	T	6-5	250	29	7	Texas-Arlington	14
42	Muncie, Chuck	RB	6-3	220	25	3	California	14
37	Myers, Tom	S	6-0	180	28	7	Syracuse	12
68	Neal, Richard	DE	6-3	263	31	10	Southern	14
83	Owens, Tinker	WR	5-11	170	24	2	Oklahoma	0
88	Parker, Joel	WR	6-5	215	26	3	Florida	1
75	Price, Elex	DT	6-3	265	28	6	Alcorn State	11
71	Schumacher, Kurt	G	6-3	246	26	4	Ohio State	14
12	Scott, Bobby	QB	6-1	197	29	7	Tennessee	5
29	Spencer, Maurice	CB	6-0	176	26	4	No Carolina Cent	0
26	Stewart, Jimmy	S	5-11	190	24	2	Tulsa	9
33	Strachan, Mike	RB	6-0	200	25	4	Iowa State	13
15	Szaro, Rich	K	5-11	204	30	4	Harvard	14
86	Thaxton, James	TE	6-3	242	29	5	Tennessee St	14
35	Van Wagner, Jim	RB	6-0	202	22	1	Michigan Tech	0
67	Watson, John	T	6-4	244	29	8	Oklahoma	5
61	Watson, Mike	T	6-6	275	23	1	Miami (O)	0
59	Watts, Robert	LB	6-3	218	24	1	Boston College	0
80	Westbrooks, Greg	LB	6-3	217	25	4	Colorado	7
65	Woods, Robert	G-T	6-4	259	28	6	Tennessee St	4
79	Zanders, Emmanuel	G	6-1	248	27	5	Jackson St	14

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Oklahoma	115	72	43
Arkansas	115	72	43
Alabama	114	71	43
Michigan	113	71	42
Penn State	112	71	41
Notre Dame	112	71	41
Washington	112	70	42
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good blocking power up the middle.

At the tackle positions, it's a whole different story, where Don Morrison and Marv Montgomery both have to prove they can play with consistency. If not, New Orleans will soon be shopping around for a couple of tackles who can.

**DEFENSE:** There're very few things you can say about the Saints' defensive unit that wouldn't be grounds for a slander suit. After all, they gave up a mind-boggling 42 touchdowns and 330.1 yards-an-outing a year ago, and just simply collapsed at the end of the '77 season when offensively weak teams like Tampa Bay (33 points) and Atlanta (35) went through the Saints like they were non-existent.

The first order-of-business in getting the defense back together is mending the front wall, but don't let that give you the idea this is the only area that needs a major overhaul. So do the linebacking and secondary, and the Saints will continue to give up points and yardage in bunches until this is accomplished.

Firing in from the line flanks are Joe Campbell and Elois Grooms, but the Saints had to surrender their top pass rusher (Bob Pollard) in the Dobler-Harris deal with St. Louis. Grooms is a fast improving four-year pro, while Campbell—a 250-pounder with great quickness—has tremendous potential, and should that duo suddenly click together, the Saints will have themselves a pretty solid pair of terminals. Also in

1977 LEADERS					
PASS	A/C	INT	YDS	TD	
Manning	205/113	9	1284	8	
Scott	82/36	8	516	3	
REC	NO	YDS	AVG	TD	
Galbreath	41	265	6.5	0	
Childs	33	514	15.6	9	
INT	NO	YDS	AVG	TD	
Crist	4	6	1.5	0	
Merlo	1	57	57.0	1	
RUSH	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD	
Muncie	201	811	4.0	6	
Galbreath	168	644	3.8	3	
PUNT	NO	YDS	AVG	BK	
Blanchard	82	3474	42.4	11	
Scott	3	95	31.7	0	
SCORE	TD	EP/MA	FG/MA	PTS	
Childs	9	0/0	0/0	54	
Szaro	0	29/31	5/13	44	

1977 Regular Season Statistics		
	SAINTS	OPP
FIRST DOWNS	223	272
NET RUSH	2024	2729
Avg Per Game	144.6	194.9
NET PASS	1573	1860
AH/Comp	321/166	290/154
Had Int	21	10
Avg Per Game	112.3	132.8
PUNTS/AVG	87/41.0	76/38.3
Punts Return/Yds	38/281	57/604
Avg Per Return	7.4	10.6
KICKOFF-RET/YDS	63/1355	45/1075
Avg Per Return	21.5	23.9
FUMBLES/LOST	20/10	29/16
FIELD GOALS	5/13	15/23
PATS	29/31	39/42
TOTAL POINTS	232	336

contention for starting duties at an end spot is Richard Neal, acquired in a minor trade from the New York Jets.

Inside at the tackle holes, almost any combination is possible, with Mike Fultz, Elex Price, Oakley Dalton and Derland Moore all in the running. Our guess is that Fultz, a powerful (6-5, 275) second-year pro, and Moore will end up the regulars, provided Moore is mended from an injury that sidelined him in '77. Price could be outstanding if he didn't get hurt so much, and Dalton has the same kind of promise but little precious experience.

The linebacking corps is another area

certain to undergo some changes, since they were the chief culprits last season when opponents rushed for 194.9 yards-per-game and 21 TDs against the Saints. And unless things improve very quickly at the 'backer positions, neither will the defense against the run.

Stationed in the middle is Joe Federspiel, while vying for starting roles on the outside are Greg Westbrook, Pat Hughes, Jim Merlo and Robert Watts. Federspiel and Westbrook are the best of that group, although both will have to stay healthier than last season, when injuries prevented them from playing at

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top-form. Merlo is an opportunistic veteran who has returned three pass interceptions for touchdowns during his pro career.

The secondary is the strongest area of the defense, especially now that cornerback Maurice Spencer is back on duty after missing last year with an injury. The tight-guarding Spencer will protect the right corner, while on the other side is Ernie Jackson, a battle-tested pro with 15 career pass interceptions. First in reserve at cornerback is Clarence Chapman, who filled in when Spencer was hurt in '77, although he needs to improve on his "deep" pass coverage before he'll be ready for full-time status.

At strong safety is Chuck Crist, who led the team with four pass interceptions last season, but he also got "burned" about twice that many times. At weak safety is Tommy Myers, a tough competitor whose only flaw is that he gets hurt too often. Both safety regulars could lose their starting jobs to Craig Cassady and Jimmy Stewart. Stewart is returning after sitting out the '77 campaign with an injury.

The kicking game is in fairly good shape. Punting is taken care of by Tom Blanchard (42.4 yard average in '77), while Rich Szaro (29-31 PATs and 5-13 FGs) is the placekicker. However, both will have to improve at kicking under pressure, because Blanchard "shanks" too many kicks and Szaro misses too many "gimmes" when the chips are on the table.

**GAMEPLAN CONCLUSION:** Well, here we go again down in Bayou Country, where Dick Nolan has stepped in as boss man for the Saints. But unless we miss our guess, the coaching merry-go-round may stop spinning for a while with Nolan at the helm, because he's the kind of skipper who should get the most out of the often unpredictable Saints. The key on offense, of course, is the quarterbacking, an asset if Manning plays well and healthy, a deficit if he can't and either Scott or Douglass has to take over. The receiving corps has solid potential, led by jarring tight end Childs and trade acquisition Ike Harris. The rushing game has been, and will continue to be, the major offensive weapon, built around Muncie and Galbreath, one of the finest tandems in the NFC. Should either need a breather, there's veteran Strachan, a ball totter who could start for some teams. The offensive line will be slightly improved, if only because Conrad Dobler has been added. But the situation at tackle is suspect to say the least, which means the Saints' quarterbacks better stay on their roller skates because the pass blocking will be weak again. The defensive unit isn't in better shape overall, although there's a chance things will improve slightly if two requirements are met. One, that veterans like Spencer, Moore, Westbrook and Federspiel stay healthy. And secondly, that young talents like Campbell, Fultz and Stewart continue to develop on schedule. Entering the first year of the Nolan Era in New Orleans, the Saints will probably improve enough to wipe out the awful memory of last season and give their loyal fans something to look forward to in the future. But that

## New Orleans Saints Rookie Roster

(Listed in order of selection)

NAME	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
Chandler, Wes	WR	6-0	184	Florida
Taylor, James	T	6-5	255	Missouri
Bennett, Barry	DT	6-3	245	Concordia
Schwartz, Don	DB	6-1	187	Washington St
Felton, Eric	DB	6-0	196	Texas Tech
Rieker, Mike	QB	6-2	200	Lehigh
Chesley, Francis	LB	6-3	205	Wyoming
Williams, Brooks	TE	6-4	218	North Carolina
Carter, Richard	DB	6-0	173	N Carolina St
Besaint, Nathan	DT	6-3	250	Southern U
Riley, Dave	RB	5-9	190	West Virginia
Hardy, Larry	TE	6-2	200	Jackson St

Some Richard Bomze credits: Ziegler in N.Y. Post; Flaherty of N.Y. News; Axthelm of Newsweek; Susskind Show - Nat'l TV  
See page 65

"improvement" will be modest at best, which means a few extra notches in the

win column, made easier of course by the NFL's new 16-game slate. We doubt that will be enough to allow the '78 Saints to escape the NFC West basement, a residence New Orleans is all too familiar with.



Saints' Archie Manning is pursued by Rams' Fred Dryer.

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October 15, 1977	Michigan	(-18)	over Wisconsin	Win	56-0
October 23, 1977	New England	(-2)	over Baltimore	Win	17-3
November 5, 1977	Georgia	(+4)	over Florida	Lose	17-22
November 24, 1977	Miami	(+4)	over St. Louis	Win	Outright 55-14
December 28, 1977	N.C. State	(+3)	over Iowa State	Win	Outright 24-14
January 2, 1978	Arkansas	(+17)	over Oklahoma	Win	Outright 35-6

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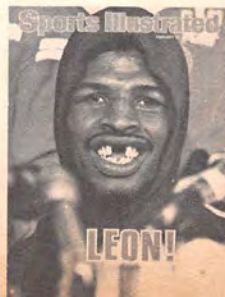
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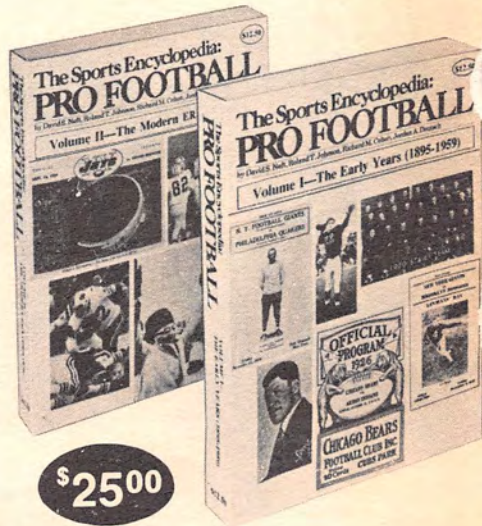
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Joe Paterno, On the Record—Pages 12-13

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By ROBERT KRAMER

The Heisman Trophy will go to a player who is not only a star on the field but also a star in the classroom. That is the prediction of Football News, which has named Campbell as the Heisman winner. Campbell, a senior at the University of Texas, is a two-time All-American and a member of the Heisman Trophy watch list. He is also a member of the Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society and a member of the National Football Foundation. Campbell is a running back and a quarterback. He is a member of the Texas Longhorns football team. He is a member of the Texas Longhorns football team. He is a member of the Texas Longhorns football team.



Earl Campbell

### Texas unanimous No. 1

Rank	Name	Team
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2	Steve Watson	Alabama
3	Timmy Smith	Alabama
4	Timmy Smith	Alabama
5	Timmy Smith	Alabama
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Texas-Oklahoma preview—Pages 16-17

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October 11, 1977

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**By GUY W. FLETCHER**  
Staff Writer  
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**USC bumps  
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Page 11



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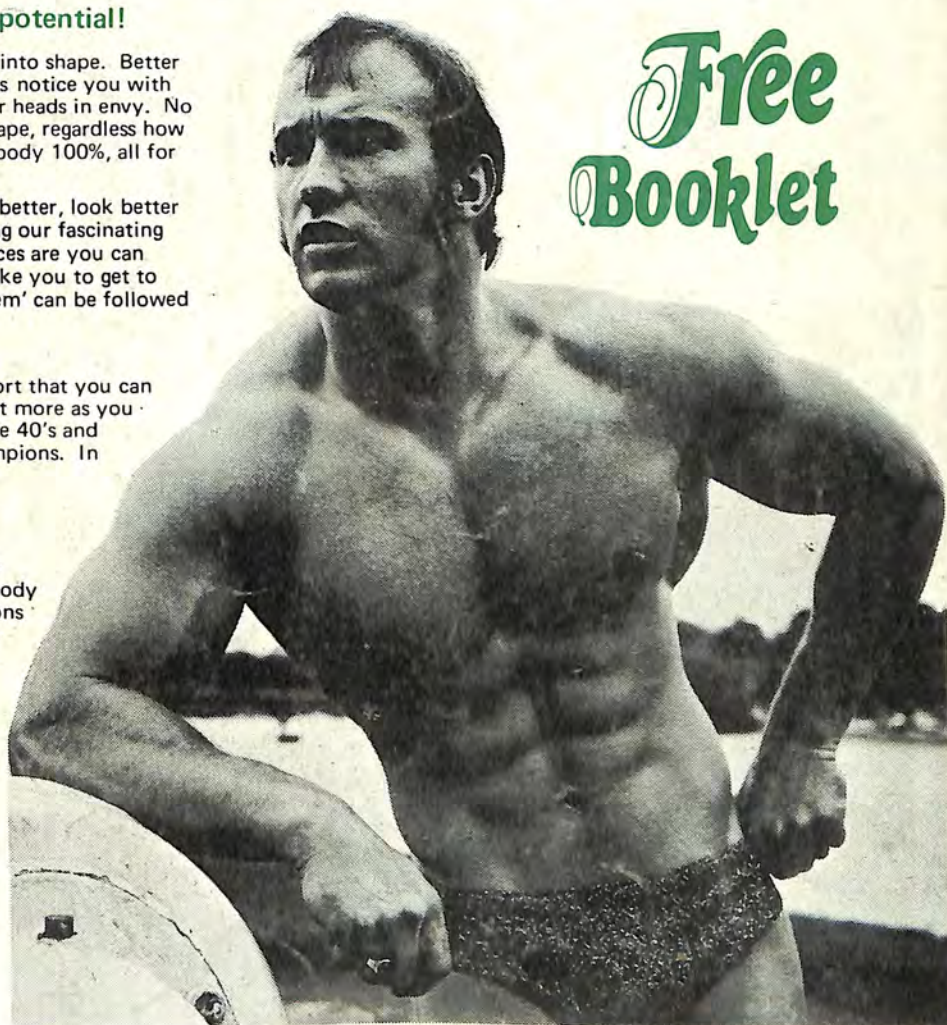
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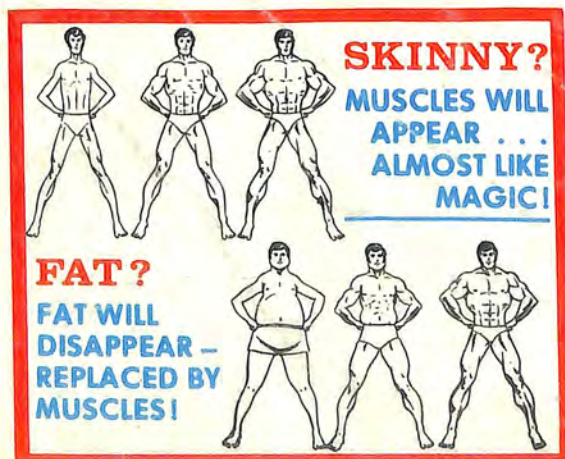


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